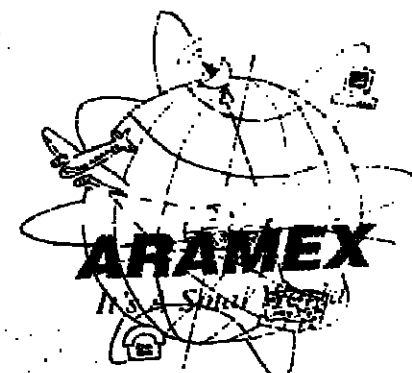


Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Une réforme de la justice attendue

Voir page 10



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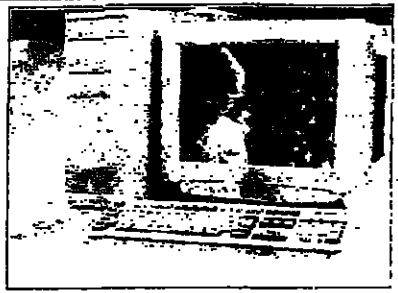
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Elections to be held under present law, IAF faces internal rift

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star
THE GOVERNMENT has finally made up its mind about the upcoming general elections bringing to an abrupt end a national dialogue that was just starting which aimed at creating consensus among representatives of the political spectrum in the country over the election law.

Informed government sources confirmed to The Star that both the Prime Ministry and the Ministry of Interior are now in agreement that the Parliamentary elections should be held under the 1993 elections law. The only possible amendments will be limited to the number of administrative districts.

Speaker of the Lower House Saad Hayel Sroor announced that these adjustments might include designating two seats for the Aqaba Governorate after deducting them from the Maan Governorate's share of seats in the Lower House. This would not entail an overall increase in the 80 seat chamber.

The Ministry of Interior has now withdrawn proposals to issue a magnetic polling card after Mr Sroor and a number of deputies objected to it for fear that the process of handing the cards might intimidate voters and reduce their participation.

So after weeks of speculation, the government has now opted to fall back on the current election law. Islamist deputies charge that the government may have relented under pressure from the centrist National Constitutional Party which is said to prefer to run under the present law.

The Islamists add that the present single vote law is preferred by the government since it has been tried before and has effectively reduced

Continued on page 2

Women's quota creates heated dialogue as elections approach

By Ilham Sadeq

Star Staff Writer
DESPISTE STATEMENTS uttered every now and then by officials that no major changes are to be made on the current elections law, Jordanian women are anxious about the fate of proposals to create a special women quota in the next Parliament.

The march for Jordanian women into politics was never easy. None of the 12 women candidates who stood for the 1989 elections succeeded. Such a failure may have reduced the number of candidates standing for the 1993 elections to three. Of those only one, Toujan Faisal, won a seat allocated for Chechnyan and Circasians.

But for this year's general elections, to be held in November, the situation looks different. The previous government was toying with the idea of giving women a fixed quota in the coming Lower House (five seats). But that controversial amendment never saw the light of day. This development has put women activists in a critical situation.

The question now is have they reached a position through which they can face electoral challenges, to field competent and strong enough candidates to compete with the men candidates?

The proposal to create a women quota is not welcomed by all women activists.

"In principle, I am against the quota [system], but because of obstacles blocking the way for women to have seats in Parliament, I have to accept it, at least for a transitional period," Senator Naela Al Rashdan told The Star.

After sometime, people will be accustomed to the presence of women in Parliament and



Changing the rules: More women believe that the only way to get their voices heard is by giving them a quota in the Lower House

thus be willing to give them their votes. Al Rashdan said. She attributed women's failure to reach the Lower House in previous elections (1989, 1993) to social factors that restrict such political

careers to men. But she added that women themselves are to be blamed. In most cases women are not aware of the importance of their presence in Parliament.

Continued on page 3

Europe brushes off US pressure to get tough with Iran

By John-Thor Dahlburg

PARIS—Brushing off US pressure to get tough with Iran after its leaders were implicated in political murder by a German court, European Union ministers Tuesday ordered mild sanctions but did nothing to reduce two-way trade now worth more than \$10 billion a year.

"You cannot reproach us for following our economic interests," said German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel. Kinkel and his counterparts from 14 other European countries, meeting in Luxembourg, also agreed that their ambassadors, withdrawn from Iran earlier this month, could return as soon as Tuesday night. European Commission sources said.

The United States, which deems Iran a terrorist state and broke off diplomatic relations

in 1980, has been trying to get European countries to join in its campaign of isolating Iran's Islamic regime politically and economically.

Europe has countered over the past five years with its own approach of "critical dialogue"—profitable trade mixed with regular political meetings to improve human rights in Iran and coax its leadership to relinquish alleged support for terrorism—which the Europeans say is far likelier to influence Iranian behavior.

"Not to talk, that is to isolate Iran, and that doesn't appear to be the right thing," French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said Tuesday in Paris.

Europe's approach was thrown into disarray by the sensational finding of a German court April 10, which ruled Iranian leaders directly ordered the 1992 assassinations of four Kurdish dissidents in a restaurant in Berlin.

The verdict sparked the greatest crisis in European-Iranian relations since the 1989 Iranian religious edict calling for the murder of British novelist Salman Rushdie as an alleged blasphemer. In its wake, all the EU countries except Greece recalled their ambassadors from Tehran, and suspended the "critical dialogue."

Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, accused the Germans of falling into "an American-Zionist trap."

The Clinton administration, which slapped a total embargo on trade with Iran in June 1995, lobbied energetically for the

Continued on page 2

British opposition shuns any move that would put off voters

By Fred Barbash

LONDON—For years, Labor Party national election campaigns in Britain were so inept that they prompted many to question whether the party actually wanted to win. This year, the campaign run by party leader Tony Blair is so smooth that nobody wonders any more whether it wants to win—only why and to do what.

This situation is no accident. It's the strategy. Sitting on a lead in the polls for five years, the party has chosen to play it safe: no big programs, no sweeping reforms, nothing that would scare anybody away.

Britain's Labor Party has always stood squarely for



Labor leader Tony Blair and his wife on the campaign trail. This time Labor's win in today's, Thursday, election looks convincing

something: at its height, bold democratic socialism; at its depth, recalcitrant trade unions. Now, according to pollsters and pundits alike, it stands primarily for its capacity to unseat the Conservatives on May 1 after 18 years out of power.

Blair has changed the party that much. Indeed, he anchors his claim to be qualified for office primarily on the achievement of that hard task.

Who can govern best, he asked rhetorically at one of his morning briefings, the weak Prime Minister John Major and his fractured party, "or me, the person who transformed the Labor Party into the strongest, most professional, most disciplined fighting force in British politics?"

Blair, 43, is, in fact, widely regarded here as one of the most skillful politicians Britain has seen in modern times. As a campaigner, he can do it all.

There he is in Edinburgh, on stage, no lectern, no script, a malfunctioning microphone attached to his shirt, leaving him free to range around in a half crouch, sweating, waving his hands, shouting and preaching to a hyped-up crowd about "hope" about building "a country we can be proud of again."

"It can happen," he says, his voice rising. "It will happen." He moves stage center, puts

his hands on his hips, closes his eyes, gazes heavenward and stands there, listening to the faithful roar in rapture.

And here he is in London's financial district, all business-like, speaking to the elite of the country's corporate world, reassuring them, with conviction, that the bad old days of union bosses taking "beer and sandwiches" with the prime minister are over, that New Labor, as he has renamed his party, is the party of business.

He can work a crowd of teen-age girls outside a school, touching outstretched fingertips like a British pop idol; emerge unscathed from the most savage one-on-one television interviews; and quote social philosophers, theologians and the lyrics in rock-'n'-roll songs.

There is a classless Blair, who writes that he never felt himself "very anchored in a particular setting or class. One of the things really wrong with Britain is that there are still hangovers from the class system that are great brakes on our ability to be a proper mobile, modern society. Sometimes it has taken the form in the Labor Party of inverted snobbery."

Finally, there is the Clintonesque Blair, who, along with lessons learned from Labor defeats in the past—ambitious

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Digital classrooms

American students in fifth and sixth grade class at Emerson Elementary in Spohnish, Washington, use their own personal laptops as they would pencil and paper. Emerson is one of 52 schools nationwide participating in an innovative approach to integrating technology into instruction using notebook computers. With support from Microsoft and Toshiba, 10,000 students and teachers are discovering the benefits of having a laptop as a personal learning tool 100 percent of the time. (PR NewsFoto)

Sexy lingerie

Egypt unveils hot new industry

By John Lancaster

CAIRO—In Egypt, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, women's fashion is governed by a simple, overriding rule: No flesh. Women are supposed to wear long sleeves and billowy skirts, cover their hair and demurely lower their gaze when walking in the street. It says so in the Koran.

In the bedroom, however, it's a different story. Married women can wear whatever they want in front of their husbands, and judging from a recent stroll through Cairo's Moski shopping district, many do.

Moski is where Cairenes go to shop for sexy lingerie. Sold openly from shops and street carts, the selection runs from flimsy thigh-length nightwear to microscopic G-strings that would not look out of place in a

Frederick's of Hollywood catalogue. "Fires of Jealousy," reads the sign pinned to a peach-colored teddy that was not designed with practicality in mind.

"I'm buying these things mainly for my honeymoon, but I hope I can go on wearing them afterward," says 23-year-old Hoda, wearing a head scarf with makeup and high heels and chaperoned by a married sister. "I do not think I can bring my husband back or prevent him from leaving me by wearing such lingerie, but I want to enjoy my private life and make him happy."

Such sentiments have not been lost on Egyptian clothing manufacturers. Rising purchasing power, a growing appetite for Western fashion and a gradual loosening of economic con-

trols have contributed to a boom in Egyptian-made lingerie, much of it just as skimpy as similar products sold in Europe or the United States.

Several Egyptian firms now manufacture lingerie under license to large European companies. Trendy boutiques carry the latest offerings from Victoria's Secret and some companies even exhibit their products in fashion shows, albeit for women only.

"This is the contrast of Egypt," says Chantal Rohr, a Paris-born choreographer who now directs fashion shows for Egypt's fledgling fashion industry. "The women in the street, they are veiled. But underneath they want exciting and sexy stuff."

That might seem like a contradiction. Egypt remains a deeply conservative society, especially where sex is concerned. Several years ago, authorities jailed a cinema owner for displaying risqué



Egyptian women buy their lingerie from shops and street carts

billboards; the actors' union is currently up in arms over the criminal conviction of an actor and actress for appearing in a bed scene that somehow found its way back into their film

after being cut by government censors.

Even belly dancers are prohibited by law from baring their navels; they have to wear

Continued on page 2

InterCon. owner assigned national credit ratings

AMMAN—Maghreb Rating, a subsidiary of the Inter-Arab Rating Co., has assigned the following national ratings to Jordan Hotels and Tourism Co. Ltd. (JHTC): short term rating A-1 (Jor) and long term rating A (Jor). IBCA/London announced this week.

JHTC is the owner of the InterContinental Hotel in Amman, the longest established five-star hotel

Continued on page 2

Trekking the desert on a horseback proves a scintillating experience

By Olivier Bras
Star staff writer

WADI RUM—One after the other, the horses dash towards the clayey area. They're carrying their riders on a long gallop, with no obstacles to hamper their run. Under their feet, the ground is resounding.

At a regular pace, they trample on heaps of earth which are filling the trenches. These are souvenirs from the last Gulf War when Jordan feared unexpected landings on the surface of the ground water of Disi.

At the end of this long run, the horses seem to smell the *persim*, a dried herb that the Bedouins give to their sheep or camels in Wadi Rum. Tonight, the camp will be at a few kilometers away from the Disi village.

This bivouac is already the fourth for a handful of riders in Wadi Rum. They started their "Jordan horse-journey" in

front of the Rum Station on the road going from the Desert Highway to the Wadi Rum village.

That's where two French people decided to build a ranch. They live on it for six months a year, with about 10 horses and foals.

They are the only ones to organize horse-trips in Wadi Rum and have been doing so for the last five years. A horse-guide in south-east France, Emmanuelle Lançon discovered Wadi Rum in 1992.

She was accompanied by Wilfried Colonna, a regular visitor to this part of the desert, and who had been climbing the hills of Wadi Rum for the last 15 years.

He also contributed to the reference guide, *Treks and Climbs in Wadi Rum* written by Tony Howard in 1987.

After her first trip, Emmanuelle decided to organize horse trips in Wadi Rum. The first task of these two adventurers was to find horses in this desert region where camels are much more common. They went to Wadi Musa to hire some

Petra-horses which tourists use.

Emmanuelle and Wilfried have different routes of trekking the desert. A seven-day trip takes you from Petra to Wadi Rum, or the other way round. If you prefer to stay in the Wadi Rum desert, you can choose the "deep south plan," which will bring to the Jordan-Saudi border.

What is interesting about this trip is that it will enable you to rediscover both the landscape and inhabitants of this area.

Over the years, Emmanuelle and Wilfried have become well-known, and have made lots of friends to rely on. Presently, they are working with people from the villages of Wadi Rum and Wadi Musa.

Sabah Attayek Al Zalabi, one of their collaborators, is maybe the best expert on Wadi Rum. He knows all the trails of this desert and the mountain routes too. He was the first local guide to bring people to climb the rocky hills, in keeping with the tradition of the bedouin mountain hunters.

From the tops of the mountains, he likes to observe the village of Rum. With time, the number of houses have grown near the Rest House as more and more bedouins began to move out. They never leave the desert for ever, always returning to the family tent in spring.

Aged about 90, Sabah's father, Sheikh Attayek, is still living in the desert. He holds on to the memory of Wadi Rum, and remembers the famous Lawrence of Arabia crossing this deserted place 80 years ago.

During this trip, meetings with the local people are numerous. In the night, they like to come to the camp for tea and refreshments, and some bring out their



oud or rabarba, a sort of violin with one string, to perform traditional songs.

After four days at Wadi Rum, the horses move to the North, and cross the calcareous plateau of Ras Al Naqab. A few centuries ago, this was used as a pass-way for caravans carrying silk and other wares to Aqaba.

Slowly, the landscape changes, and after the desert, the riders discover the aridity of the region. The road rises more and more, as the mountains surrounding Petra appear, while Mount Auran sits imposingly.

Once the horses reach the top of the mountain near the village of Rafif, they continue to follow the treks on the ridge, before going down in a gorge leading them to Wadi Musa.

In seven days, the horses cover about 250 kilometers. Cantering on all grounds under the sun, they are able to do much more than their riders. This long journey offers a complete panorama of the south of Jordan. For the riders who are worried about such a long distance, it's possible to have shorter trips of two to three days in Wadi Rum. Time enough to allow them to profit from the Wadi Rum desert, and enjoy both the pleasure of riding and the discovery of this beautiful place.

Contact:
The desert guides
Alcazar Hotel
P.O. Box 392 - Aqaba
Fax: 03 314 133



Egypt unveils hot new industry

Continued from page 1

a filmy veil that covers the midriff.

Such attitudes are rooted in the Koran, which enshrines the word of God as related by the Prophet Muhammad. And the Koran is emphatic on the subject of skin: Outside the home and in front of strangers, the holy book says, women should "draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands." Exceptions are made for close relatives, small children and slaves.

The Prophet, however, appears to have had no problem with sex between husbands and wives (he had at least nine). The Koran contains no prohibition against sex for pleasure, for example, and Islamic scholars generally have taken a

much more relaxed attitude toward birth control than has the Catholic Church.

A quick check with religious authorities at Al Azhar University, the oldest center of learning in Sunni Islam, confirmed that sexy lingerie can have a place in the private life of a good Muslim.

"There is nothing wrong with a man getting pleasure from his wife... as long as both have pleasure (and) as long as they are married," says Sheikh Abdel Azim el Hemaily, a member of Al Azhar's fatwa committee, whose "fatwas," or religious opinions, on topics from organ transplants to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel carry enormous weight in the Muslim world. "If they both fulfill their sexual duty it prevents them from searching

elsewhere."

In Moski, a teeming pedestrian bazaar in downtown Cairo, Westerners often do a double take at the sight of lingerie that might arrive in plain brown wrappers back home. But shopkeepers who sell the stuff see no contradiction. "Even the completely veiled people, they come and buy lingerie," says Mohammed Muharram, 48, whose shop displays wispies and teddies with plunging necklines and transparent, Egyptian-made G-strings trimmed with feathers and fringe.

"It's not wrong if she wears it in private," he says before excusing himself to pray. "Our religion is very forgiving toward this sort of thing."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Increase in exams in MNC testify to growing musical ears in Jordan

The April 1997 Practical Examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) was concluded at the National Music Conservatory (NMC) Noor Al Hussein foundation on Sunday 27 April 1997. About 411 music students from the NMC, music centres and private tutors sat for the examination which was conducted by the British examiner, Mr Christopher Moore, who came to Jordan especially for this purpose.

The NMC became the representative of the ABRSM in Jordan in 1991 for the purpose of providing music students in Jordan the opportunity to receive the certificates of the Board that are recognized and accredited by the most prestigious music schools in the world.

Since 1991 the NMC has been furnishing the Theory examination twice a year and the Practical examination once a year. Due to the continuous increase in the number of students wishing to sit for the Board's examinations the NMC will start as of this year to furnish the Practical examination twice a year.

Since it assumed the representative of the ABRSM in Jordan, the NMC has managed to raise the number of students taking the Theory and Practical examinations from 200 in 1991 to 1000 this year.

Moreover, the NMC has graduated a number of students from the pre-college programme of the Board. These students are currently pursuing their highest education through the college level program of the Board at the end of which, these students will receive the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music.

The ABRSM is the leading international examining body for music with a system of examinations and assessments in over 80 countries around the world. Examinations are offered in 35 instruments, singing, theory and practical musicianship, and are open to students of all ages. It was established in 1889 to provide schools, private teachers of music and the general public with a scheme of music examinations of recognized authority.

The Associated Board is



linked to the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music in London, the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. The Board examines over half a million candidates each year, making it the largest international examining body for music in the world.

To further endorse its educational system, in 1993 the NMC signed a cooperation agreement with Conservators

de Region de Boulogne Bilancourt in France.

The agreement provides NMC students the opportunity to sit for the examinations of the French conservatory. Upon passing, the students would receive a certificate that enjoys the same accreditation as that given by the French Conservatory to its students.

The upcoming examination of the French examination will be held early June 1997.

Europe brushes off US pressure to get tough with Iran

Continued from page 1

Europeans to take harsh measures in their turn. Over the weekend, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote European governments, while last week, her undersecretary for political affairs, Peter Tarnoff, toured European capitals.

However, the ministers, meeting in Luxembourg, could find the necessary unanimity only on a series of relatively mild measures, including a continued freeze on "critical dialogue."

They ordered an end to bilateral visits at the ministerial level with Iran and pledged to cooperate to expel Iranian agents from Europe and deny entry visas to Iranians working in "intelligence and security." The embargo on arms sales to Iran will continue, the ministers said.

Perhaps most significantly, the Europeans stipulated there could be better relations with

Iran only if "Iranian authorities respect the norms of international law and refrain from acts of terrorism, including against Iranian citizens living abroad, and cooperate in preventing such acts."

"This is a firm declaration, but not a declaration of war," Ramon de Miguel, Spain's secretary of state for foreign affairs, told reporters.

Ibrahim Karawan, head of the Middle East program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, disagreed with the Spaniard, calling the EU's measures "very close to what the Americans call 'a slap on the wrist.'"

"There is an element of verbal acrobatics to make it seem like enough to satisfy people who wanted strong action, but not enough to really endanger economic interests," Karawan said in a telephone interview.

Iran has run up several billion dollars of debts with

France and Germany as it seeks to acquire heavy machinery and high technology in exchange for its oil. Paris and Bonn have been reluctant to sever all ties because of intense lobbying from leading exporters and fears within both governments that they would be left holding Iran's unpaid debts.

In Tehran, meanwhile, the parliament's foreign affairs

committee called for a halt to Iran's dialogue with Europe until it proved "constructive" and "accompanied by goodwill." Other Iranian officials called on the government to shift the focus of commercial relations away from Europe toward Asia.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Freelance writers wanted.
Excellent command of the English language is a must. Computer literacy would be an advantage. If interested fax your CV to 648298.

Elections to be held under present law, IAF faces internal rift

Continued from page 1

the number of IAF deputies in the Lower House.

The IAF is itself facing internal problems and divisions that promise to add to the Islamist concern over their performance in the coming elections. Recently, Taffieh deputy Dr Abdullah Al Akaleh presented a paper in which he talked about the control of Islamists of Palestinian origin over the Islamic movement leadership. He said this has distanced the leadership from what he termed as the Jordanian agenda.

Added to this is the decision taken by IAF leadership not to allow a large number of IAF deputies to run for reelection, a decision which may not be upheld by all deputies who may decide to run on an independent ticket.

Among those deputies whom the IAF will not allow them to run in the coming election are Abdel Munim Abu Zunt, Mohammad Al Hajj, Suliman Al Saad, Daifallah Al Moumni and Bader Al Riat. The IAF believes these deputies are viewed by the voters as religious figures who may be good orators, but lack experience and knowledge in politics, social and public issues.

Sheikh Abu Zunt refused to confirm or deny the IAF decision and told *The Star* that if this is true then he will have to consider his next move, hinting that he may run independently relying on the wide public support he enjoys in his Amman district.

Meanwhile, the Government will discuss the final draft of the election law, after the minor amendments, on Saturday. Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali has maintained contacts with the Speaker of the Lower House and the deputies and will most likely meet with them again in the coming week.

InterCon.

Continued from page 1

in the city. The hotel is undergoing a \$31 million rebuilding and refurbishment program that will add 125 rooms to the 366 presently available, up grade guest facilities and include a mall of up to 26 shops.

Work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 1998, although some new facilities such as terrace, pool and health club are likely to be income generating during 1997. The expansion is also something of a defensive measure to consolidate JHTC's position against the two existing five star hotels in Amman, and also against two new entrants scheduled to begin operations at the end of the decade.

A key business risk is that JHTC's sole source of revenue is the hotel and any disruption in the hotel's operations may cause difficulties in servicing outstanding debt. In mitigation, the operating record of the hotel over the last 34 years recognized by the signing of a new ten-year management contract with InterContinental Hotels Corp. in November 1996.

The Jordan hotel and tourism sector can suffer from heightening tensions within neighboring states, but around two-thirds of JHTC's guests are business, diplomatic or official travelers which lessens its dependency on tourist groups.

JHTC is profitable and sufficiently cash generative to fund much of the capital expenditure from its own sources. Although debt level is predicted to rise, there should be little difficulty in servicing the financing costs even if occupancy levels decline.

The controlling shareholder for JHTC is Zara Investment (Holding) Co. Ltd., a private company based in Amman which also has investments in other tourist businesses. Until February 1995, JHTC was majority owned by the government but Zara acquired a 51% holding as part of the privatization process taking place in Jordan.

Azraq, Dana reserves continues to flourish with outside help

AMMAN—The conservation of the Azraq Oasis and Dana Wildlands—the largest project undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan—officially entered its second phase with a signing ceremony between the Ministry of Planning and UNDP. The project agreement, which aims to consolidate the achievements of the first phase, was signed on behalf of the Government by Minister of Planning, Dr Rima Khataif, and by UNDP's representative, Jorgen Lissner.

Funded by a \$6.3 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), phase one of the Azraq/Dana conservation projects achieved considerable success since it was first launched in 1994. The Azraq Oasis Conservation Project became one of the first in the world which attempted to restore an arid zone wetland ecosystem. Using an innovative technique of reverse pumping, ground water was channelled back into the Azraq Basin through existing pipe networks.

In Dana, the protection of biodiversity has been improved with a management plan which regulates the flow of visitors, vehicles, and grazing in the nature reserve. One of the major achievements of the project was to encourage income-generating activities among the local community. After the old irrigation system was restored in Dana, for example, many villagers have taken to growing organic fruit and herbs, which are then dried



Azraq Wetland: An Oasis that was redeveloped

and sold in the village gift shop and stores in Amman.

With a GEF grant of \$1.95 million and a government contribution of \$750,000, the second phase of the Azraq/Dana projects will address the pressures exerted on the two ecosystems by development and mass tourism. During the 1994-95 period, Jordan witnessed a 40 percent increase in tourist trade. As a result, the project has underlined the importance of nature conservation and environmental protection, while promoting ecotourism in the same time.

The project will also focus on the institutional strengthening of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the non-governmental organization entrusted with managing the Azraq and Dana reserves.



Prison hung

A hunger strike held by the head of the Prisoners' Union, called Lower House deputy Dr. Abdullah Al Akaleh, who sent a letter to the Prime Minister, saying that the prisoners would not return to work until their demands were met.

King intervenes

His Majesty Hussein ordered Amman Municipality to demolish the house of the people's head, Abu Sa'ad, who is a member of the Royal Council. The King's intervention came after the demolition of the house of the people's head, Abu Sa'ad, who is a member of the Royal Council. The King's intervention came after the demolition of the house of the people's head, Abu Sa'ad, who is a member of the Royal Council.

Hail, the new

That's the message that the new King, Hussein, has sent to the people of Jordan. He has promised to bring about a change in the way the country is run, and to ensure that the interests of all Jordanians are protected. He has also promised to bring about a new era of peace and stability in the country.

Elections to

It has finally come. The Jordanian Association of Lawyers is preparing to hold its annual general assembly tomorrow. The assembly will elect a new president and vice-president, and will also discuss the association's future plans. The association is one of the oldest and most respected in Jordan, and its decisions are highly influential.

Another Netan

We can't see that newly-born offspring. The latest case, however, is a girl born to a couple who are both registered as "Netanyahu" in the civil registry. The girl's name is "Netanyahu" and she was born on May 1st, 1997. The couple's names are "Netanyahu" and "Netanyahu".

Cancellation o

It has always been reaffirmed once again that the Ministry of Education has concluded that it would support low-income families in the needy. No further action will be taken.

LURIE'S WORLD



"That will teach those Israelis a lesson!"

Our Say...

Majali's elections headaches

NO MATTER what kind of election law the government chooses to throw at the Jordanian electorate and the country's political parties and blocs, its motives will always come under scrutiny by the Islamist and other opposition forces in Jordan. In recent weeks the public has been kept amused at the government's helpless attempts to formulate a straight forward and clear policy on the coming general elections. Every day those in charge of the elections file, from the prime minister to his deputy to his minister of interior, spend their time making contradictory statements to the press. Whether it has to do with the number of deputies and districts or women quota and magnetic voting cards, the public were bombarded with different views coming from one source: the government.

So confused and confusing has the issue become that the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Jordan has come out to openly state his movement's fears of vote rigging in the coming elections. He called for solid guarantees of the government's neutrality in the November polls. Such insinuations would not carry much weight if it wasn't for the embarrassing way the government has handled the elections issue so far. And if this government does not move now to put its own house in order to save its credibility, then it should resign and let another government deal with the election challenge.

Prime Minister's Majali's practice of "consulting" with the off duty deputies, who are on a long vacation until the next elections, has not paid off. In fact, it has launched a national debate about the proposed amendments to the election law, which was passed only few months ago. But the government was not happy with the attention the election law and the proposed amendments were getting. So in an unexpected twist, Dr Majali decided to stick to the present law after minor administrative changes.

Such a turnaround has heated the ongoing public debate further. In fact anything that the government does now is viewed with suspicion. The opposition, led by the Islamists, has cast enough doubts about the government's real motives. So anything Dr Majali does now will be viewed as part of a conspiracy against the opposition.

Such serious developments weaken the democratic process. Not that the opposition would act differently if the government was more clear about what it wanted to do, but that the uncertainties surrounding government statements and actions have given the opposition's claims much needed legitimacy.

Since the controversial single vote elections law was finally adopted by an elected parliament earlier this year, it is difficult for us to understand why Dr Majali, the author of that controversial law, would even think of a new draft election law in the absence of Parliament.

But now he appears to have accepted that law as a good base for holding the November elections. That's a good decision. But now the issue is no longer the election law, but the government's credibility and neutrality. We wonder how Dr Majali will get himself out of this one.

Letters to the Editor

Propaganda not being swallowed

To The Editor,

Just a note to let people in Jordan know that the propaganda on behalf of Israel isn't being absorbed or believed by all of us here in America.

On one talk show program from New York City I listened to one caller state that all of the wars Israel fought since WW II have been defensive. The so-called "noted talk show" host said nothing! Mr Limbaugh was an absolute blank. No corrections or refutations.

Does the movie "Exodus" ring anyone's memory bell? I remember the Jews in this country fawning over this movie that depicted their views of the struggle as newly arriving immigrants from Europe to Palestine. It's either my imagination or I don't remember my history too well, but I thought the Jews forcibly took the land they now call Israel from the Palestinians. I don't recollect the Palestinians "giving" any land or "welcoming" the swarm of refugees. I don't re-

member the Jews buying any land.

And so today, every time there is a problem in the Middle East, the Israeli ambassador or Prime Minister comes to Washington with "their view" of the problem and, naturally, get full and continuous news coverage of their speeches on prime time. I often wonder why the opposing side to the argument is seldom mentioned? Something is wrong here!

It's obvious that the US has been "had" by the Jews of the world. I really don't blame them for wanting a homeland, but just be honest about how it came about. They took it by force of arms and the backing of the US. In lieu of the problems of the Middle East, it's been nothing but a pain in the ass for America's non-Jewish population.

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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Clinton, please become a president

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

A DECENT individual condemns terrorism and violence. Palestinians and Arabs commit terrorist acts and the whole world, including Arab leaders and the media, condemn it. As do they should. Yet hawkish Israelis commit terrorism continually and are hardly censured. There is always excuses for Israeli state and individual terrorism. From Qana (105 civilians killed by Israeli artillery in a UN compound in southern Lebanon, April 1995) to the almost ritual slaughter of Palestinians by Israeli settlers.

When Israeli terrorism occurs, it "is provoked by the victims." When Arab terrorism occurs, it is "bloodthirstiness." Is Clinton unable to hear the noises of earth moving machines burying the peace process and the hopes of millions in the Middle East—Jew and Arab—for a peaceful future?

Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington the first week of April was the most serious blow to President Clinton, his leadership and foreign policy in his second term. It may have been the most serious blow to Clinton since he became president in 1992. The diplomatic language used by Clinton and his aides to describe the content and outcome of the two-hour meeting held at the White House cannot hide the total failure of this meeting and Netanyahu's stubborn refusal to listen to the sound of reason and to the host's attempt to save the peace process—even to save Israel itself from the dangerous abyss to which it has been pushed by its prime minister and his extremist, expansionist ideologues in Likud and the small fanatical religious parties that support his government in the Knesset.

Netanyahu's attitude is not new to Clinton. In his past visits, the prime minister acted and spoke with arrogance and defiance to the point of embarrassing his host.

Nevertheless, Clinton openly avoided criticizing Netanyahu. One must assume this was out of politeness and courtesy extended to a guest.

Hospitality and courtesy are laudable traits. But when the guest abuses these acts as Netanyahu done repeatedly and insults not just the host but the office of the leader of the US and the world, then an equitable reply is demanded.

Netanyahu's speech before the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in Washington was the ultimate in abuse of hospitality. It was a direct and unequivocal challenge to Clinton himself and his august office.

AIPAC leaders made certain to amass large numbers of senators and representatives, plus big names in the power houses of US society, for the session in which Netanyahu spoke. These leaders repeatedly rose to applaud the prime minister's defiant statements and theatrical polemics. It was as if Netanyahu and AIPAC were telling Clinton that they can muster more support and muscle than the him, even in his very own capital and on his own turf—and not for a cause that serves American national interests, not necessarily even Israel's interests, but for the fanatical ideology of groups and parties in distant Israel and their more-vocal-than-numerous supporters in the United States.

Netanyahu has succeeded in isolating the US and alienating it from its European allies, the Islamic world, the Non-Aligned Movement (comprising over 70 nations) and even from its friends and allies in the Arab world. In short, the US stands alone with Israel against the rest of the world in matters

of manner of peace in the Middle East.

Clinton's obvious and probable refusal to appear with Netanyahu in a joint press conference after the latest Washington meeting was another signal of the president's irritation. But gestures and polite diplomatic hints are not the language persons like Netanyahu understand. They interpret Clinton's docility as weakness, and mean to show they can turn US legislators against him as well as mobilize the media against him and his programs. That is what Clinton is hearing from Netanyahu and his entourage.

Even James Baker, architect of the Madrid Conference of 1990 that opened the road to the present peace process, criticized Clinton's handling of Netanyahu's repeated breaches of the Oslo Accords. Other leaders have echoed Baker, but Clinton appears to remain deaf, continuing to swallow one insult after another, further undermining US credibility as guarantor of the peace accords and America's leadership as facilitator and honest broker.

Can Arafat be expected to control his 2.2 million destitute, desperate, disappointed, disinherited, angry Palestinians with his weak police force when almighty Israel failed to control the Intifada that raged from 1988-1994?

Is Arafat expected to join Israeli troops and settlers in massacring Palestinians to protect Netanyahu's excesses and usurpation of the Palestinians' rights and land?

To blame Arafat for having allegedly given a "green light" to violence is ludicrous.

During the Cold War the US justified blindly supporting Israel as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism and the communist tide. What is the justification today? To be a friend of Israel is fine, but to support Israel's violation of human rights, international law, UN resolutions, signed treaties, and civilized human behavior is beyond comprehension.

Even worse, Israel is harming US national interests in the Middle East, strengthening anti-US, anti-peace extremists in the very countries that consider themselves friends of America and whose resources are fueling western economies.

The United States must help Israel save itself and its soul. That is what a true friend does. America must defend the genuine national interests of the US and help put an end to the insults being heaped by Netanyahu on the integrity of this nation and on the legacy of Yitzhak Rabin, the friend who gave his life for the cause of peace among all the children of Abraham.

LURIE'S WORLD



The Abu Marzook affair and what it means for American justice

By Stanley Cohen

AFTER MORE than twenty-two months of imprisonment in the United States for crimes alleged by Israel, Dr Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook now stands vindicated of all charges, following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's terse announcement to abandon "for security purposes," their attempts to extradite him. Indeed, it has been Dr Abu Marzook's steadfast position since his arrest at New York's Kennedy Airport in July, 1995, that Israel never wanted him to stand trial there, that they never had a plausible case against him, and that their connivance with US State Department Middle East policy-makers to exclude him from the political process in the Occupied Territories was the sole reason for his lawless arrest.

We now know, after almost two years of Justice Department duplicity and a grotesque legal pantomime in the federal courts of this country, that the United States itself at best has colluded with Israel at every level to deprive Dr Abu Marzook of his freedom, strip him of his dignity and reputation, and abuse his rightful position as a leader of the Palestinian people. Worse yet, it has permitted pressure from Israeli and American Jewish sources to manipulate and destroy the process due him, a lawful US resident.

It has been clear for some time that Dr Abu Marzook, as the political leader of Hamas, should have enjoyed a place at the table in all of Israel's negotiations with the Palestinian people. For more than 15 years, Hamas struggled on behalf of its people and earned their respect, from its educa-

tional and social programs to its thorough revival of Islamic identity among Gaza and West Bank residents. Yet their militant and unflinching commitment to freeing their land of Israeli oppression has made them a force with which Israel would rather not carry on a dialogue.

In engineering Dr Abu Marzook's absence from the political scene in Palestine over these critical past two years, Israel has afforded itself the luxury of positioning Yasser Arafat as the sole voice to represent the oppressed millions in the Occupied Territories, as well as the many millions more driven from their homeland in the great Palestinian diaspora of the last 50 years.

Paradoxically, Israel's cynical strategic move may have doomed their so-called "peace efforts" from the start, as Dr Abu Marzook may be, in practical terms, the one Palestinian leader who can bring an end to the violence, and win a dignified peace for his people.

It is this profound cynicism and shameful bad faith which has guided their hand throughout the entire Abu Marzook affair.

Dr Abu Marzook and his wife, Nadia El Ashi, have lived in the United States for more than 15 years, and both earned their degrees from universities here—his a doctorate in engineering—and four of their six children are native-born citizens of this country.

This is a man who owns a home in this country, has owned a business, has paid his taxes year in and year out, and has believed in the American way of life, its courts and institutions, and its freedoms—even while fighting internationally for the freedom of his

own people.

Indeed, devout Muslims throughout the world can be characterized in general terms as conservative people—their actions in the world are strictly governed by scripture, in all areas of their lives, from tithing 10 percent of their annual income to charity, to being unable to receive interest on bank accounts.

What is more, the Koran enjoins all Muslims living in secular societies to obey the laws of the land they live in, and live in accordance with that society's wishes; indeed, as evidenced by the government's continuing failure to offer any charges against Dr Abu Marzook, we can conclude he has faithfully fulfilled his religion's duty to honor the laws of the land.

From the beginning, Dr Abu Marzook has met Israel's criminal charges openly and sincerely, vigorously denying any and all guilt while opposing with all the resources he could muster the United States Justice Department's attempts to extradite him.

Finally tiring of endless bad faith on the part of the US and Israeli prosecutions, as well as the clear, pro-Israeli bias on the part of the Federal judge who initially decided his fate, he has withdrawn his legal opposition to extradition, in effect saying, "You want me to



Abu Marzook

stand trial—I will go willingly and fight these charges." Having called Israel's bluff, Dr Abu Marzook has forced them at last to reveal their craven agenda for the ruse it has always been.

Who could believe at the time of Dr Abu Marzook's arrest that Israel truly intended to carry out their extradition of him?

Surely they knew then, as they are forced to admit now, that his presence in an Israeli courtroom, facing baseless charges which the Israeli government knew it could never substantiate, would hardly further the "peace process."

Surely they knew then, as they solemnly confess now, that such a trumped-up action against a legitimate spokesman for Palestinian national aspira-

Continued on page 8

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek
Track moves

THERE HAS been plenty of analysis on the issue of linking the Palestinian peace track with the continuation of normalization between Jordan and Israel. Some even wrote that the previous Jordanian government tried to line the Jordan-Israel bilateral relations with the outcome of the Arafat-Netanyahu negotiations, while others immediately started speculating that the Majali cabinet will dissociate the two issues from each other.

We must always remember that it was the choice of our Palestinian brethren, at the Oslo kitchen, to separate the peace tracks. Their own political decision, it allowed them the room to manoeuvre to achieve the best results for their respective sides.

Nevertheless, the political decision at Oslo has no bearing on the organic relationship between the Jordanians and the Palestinians of the self-rule areas, and does not effect the historical linkage of the two people, which had developed into one common fate. One has to keep in mind that what has been written in terms of comparing peace tracks and bilateral relations under the circumstances is totally unbalanced as well as uncomprehending in identifying the relationship of the two concepts with each other.

For a start, the existence of the term peace track, indicates very clearly that peace has not been achieved yet, and that negotiations are still on the agenda to ascertain the final results. This is obviously the case regarding the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and there are still many issues to be resolved before peace can be achieved.

But Jordanian-Israeli relations are of a different nature, and are of a separate qualitative level of development. Jordan, as a sovereign independent state, signed a peace agreement with Israel as a result of the normal consequence or negotiations on the Jordan-Israel peace track.

We can conclude that the matter of tracks had outlived its useful existence. Naturally, Jordan is concerned with peace-building and cooperation in the region than sticking to defunct notions of peace processes and tracks. It would be erroneous to link the status of the Jordan-Israel peace relations, with the PNA-Israeli peace negotiations, for the obvious reasons of comparing two different levels of relations with each other.

Still, Jordan supports the Palestinian independent decision, and cannot forget its responsibility towards our Palestinian brothers in realizing their dream of living in peace and prosperity. This is a matter of fact, and an ongoing process that will not stop, but it would be dangerous to entertain notions of unbalanced linkages, lest this imbalance in status hinders the future development of relations with Israel while at the same time it reflects negatively on Palestinian-Israeli relations. Therefore, instead of using Jordanian influence in bringing solutions when there are none, we will end up contributing to additional problems where there are many.

The issue of linking the peace tracks, seems to have its precedence in the relationship of Syria to Lebanon with Israel. Here the attachment is done according to the mutual concern of both fraternal countries. This is notwithstanding the presence of a large contingent of Syria troops to facilitate this consent, but at least, one can talk about equal concepts, and perhaps equal developments, with the possibility of one partner in the relationship calling the final shots.

By definition, negotiations have an allowance of set-backs, but bilateral relations assume a different dimension, with more serious consequences.

Business scene

For the second year, Goldstar East Industrial Co. recorded a record of JD 21.1996 compared with million in 1995, reached JD 1.1995, its sales reached JD 5.1995 compared with JD 5.1995, its net profit reached JD 268.561.

Jordan Pipes Manufacturing seeks to boost production and sales. The company reached 9850 tons in 1995, its sales reached JD 5.61995 compared with JD 5.61995, its net profit reached JD 268.561.

The first Bahraini products export to be held in Amman 2-6 June. Amongst the products on display are: chemicals, petrochemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and other industrial products. The event is targeted at boosting economic ties between Bahrain and Jordan.

A seminar was held to enhance the co-operation between the two countries. The seminar was organized by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Jordan. It is seeking to commercialize the Jordanian market and to attract foreign investment in the West Bank. The seminar was held in Amman, Jordan, and was attended by representatives from the Jordanian government and the private sector.

The Jordan Islamic Bank generated a profit of JD 1.1996. The bank's budget was JD 1.1996, and it recorded a profit of JD 1.1996. The bank's assets reached JD 4.1996, and its liabilities reached JD 4.1996. The bank's net profit reached JD 1.1996.

Foreign Exchange Tuesday, 15

	Buy JD
US \$	0.7088
£	1.1510
DM	0.4124
CHF	0.4801
FRF	0.1227
Yen	0.5624
HKD	0.2667
SGD	0.8419

SATURDAY

Lab Pharm. Industry

MCC

Lab Cable

Chemical

Lab

Lab

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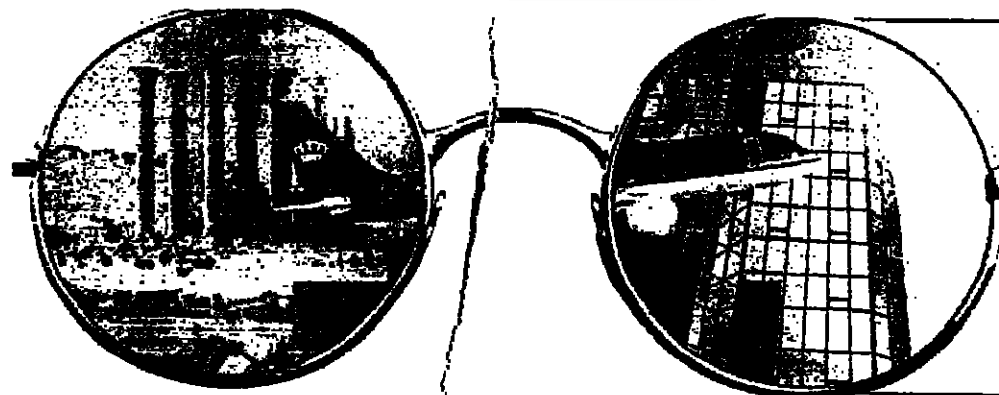
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Amman-Detroit

Now, direct flights from Amman to Detroit on Saturdays. Effective 31st of May.
For details, call RJ Sales Offices or your local agent.

ROYAL JORDANIAN
Reflecting the Change.

Business scene

For the second consecutive year, Goldstar (Middle East) recorded stable growth rates of JD 21 million in 1996 compared with JD 24.6 million in 1995. Its profits reached JD 1.8 million. Goldstar's total earnings reached JD 3 million while revenues at JD 6 million against JD 6.3 million in 1995.

Jordan Pipes Manufacturing seeks to boost its production and sales in 1997. The company's output reached 9850 tons in 1996 compared with 9105 tons in 1995. Its sales were 11,000 tons at JD 5.6 million in 1995 compared with 9455 tons at JD 5 million. The company's net profits were JD 268,361.

The first Bahrain industrial products exhibition is to be held in Amman from 2-6 June. Among the products on display are foodstuffs, equipment for Petrochemicals, petroleum and aluminium manufacturing, utensils, furniture and electrical instruments. The expo is targeted at boosting economic ties between Jordan and Bahrain.

A seminar will be convened to enhance commercial co-operation between the two countries. It will be organized through co-operation with Amman Chamber of Industry. Bahrain is seeking to establish commercial links with importers and businessmen in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian and Iraq. Jordan has held its first exhibition in Bahrain in 1995 and is planning to hold the second next year. A high level commercial mission for Bahrain is expected to visit Amman during the expo headed by the Minister of Trade Ali Saleh Al-Saleh.

The Jordan Islamic Bank generated a profit of JD 5.6 million in 1996. The Bank's budget was JD 618.6 million, deposits JD 502.3 million and investments reached JD 442 million, according to the Bank's annual report. The general assembly of the Islamic Bank agreed to distribute 12% profits of the capital among shareholders.

Foreign Exchange

Tuesday, 15 April

	Buy JD	Sell JD
USD	0.7080	0.7100
GBP	1.1510	1.1568
EUR	0.4124	0.4145
CHF	0.4801	0.4825
JPY	0.1227	0.1233
HKD	0.5624	0.5632
SGD	0.3667	0.3685
THB	0.0419	0.0421

Shale Oil: Jordan's North Sea

By Dr Marndouh G. Salameh

FOR A country bordered by two of the world's major crude oil producers—Saudi Arabia and Iraq—Jordan seems unlucky for it is bordered by the parts of those countries that have, until very recently, never shown positive signs of hydrocarbons. The same has long been true of Jordan itself.

Now the luck seems to be changing. Natural gas has already been found in commercial quantities that could provide 25 per cent of the country's electric power; oil, too, has shown its presence. Furthermore, Jordan sits on huge proven and exploitable reserves of oil shale (Bituminous limestone) estimated at 36.7 billion tonnes (bt) containing about 3.7 bt (equivalent to 27.12 billion barrels) of extractable oil. These reserves of extractable oil are more than six times the proven crude oil reserves of the UK's North Sea and virtually equivalent to those of either the United States or Libya.

Over recent years, Jordan's energy demand has averaged some 60,000 barrels of oil per day (b/d). By the year 2000, Jordan's energy demand is projected to rise to 80,000 b/d oil equivalent (oil and gas). Jordan has so far been partly reliant on trucked oil from Iraq and partly on what it can buy on the spot market and ship in to Aqaba for onward road transit to the Zarqa refinery. Costs are estimated at \$400 million per year and supply security is fragile.

Jordan now generates 17 per cent of its electric power from gas-driven turbines fuelled from the Risha gasfield. Jordan's single gas-producing field. By the year 2000, gas-driven turbines could be providing 25 per cent of all power consumed in Jordan.

The Risha gasfield has proven reserves of around 530 billion cubic feet. It currently produces 35 million cubic feet per day (mcf/d) from a sustainable capacity of 51 mcf/d.

Oil was discovered in 1984 in the 'Hamza oilfield' near Azraq when an experimental well tested 400 barrels a day (b/d). Today, the 'Hamza oilfield' is producing 650 b/d from just two wells. The oilfield is thought to contain around 10 million barrels of recoverable oil. Oil has also been found near the Dead Sea. No results have been released yet pending well completion and assessment.

However, if Jordan has not yet discovered crude oil in commercial quantities, it sits on huge proven reserves of oil shale estimated at 36.7 bt. The oil content of this gigantic tonnage is in the order of 3.7 bt (equivalent to 27.12b) with a specific gravity of 15 API. This gravity is similar to the bulk of Venezuela's heavy crude oil reserves. The oil shale reserves are exploitable by open-cast mining and are easily accessible.

We are now at the point where technology has made the extraction and processing costs of shale oil competitive with conventional crude oil. This is particularly so when we take into account the cost of exploration for conventional oil.

The Canadians who have huge reserves of oil shale have developed the technology to extract and process shale oil at approximately \$8-\$11/barrel and to realize a profit margin of \$7-\$11/barrel. Consequently at a \$22/barrel price for conventional oil, producing oil from shale becomes economically viable. This will enable Jordan to become self-sufficient in oil and to recoup its initial investments within a period of 4-5 years. It will also save Jordan's balance of payments up to \$400 million currently spent annually on oil imports. Eventually Jordan could also become a net exporter of shale oil. However, the economic viability of shale oil will, ultimately, depend on the price of oil maintaining a level of at least \$29/barrel.

The Paris-based international Energy Agency (IEA) projects a price of \$25/barrel by 2000 rising to \$28/barrel by 2015 and if the global production capacity tightens due to severe shortage of investment funds, the price could exceed \$35/barrel by 2005. These price projections favor the development of shale oil in Jordan.



Salameh

Following the establishment of the National Petroleum Co. (NPC), the government has led an aggressive campaign to revive exploration for oil and gas in the Kingdom by offering exploration and production-sharing contracts with attractive terms to foreign oil companies. This has resulted in the signing of two new exploration and production-sharing contracts with Anadarko Petroleum Corp. and Trans Global

Oil in 1996 while a letter of intent with Malaysia's National Petroleum Company "Petrinas" is about to be finalized and a gas exploration agreement with the American Oil Company "Amoco" for the further development of the Risha gasfield, is under negotiation.

The exploration and production-sharing contract signed between Jordan and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. covers 16,800 sq. km acreage in the northeast of the country near the Iraq border where Iraq reported in 1993 a major oil find. The production-sharing agreement with Trans Global Oil covers a block of 6,675 sq. km located in the Dead Sea along the borders with the West Bank and Israel.

Jordan is, thus, in the fortunate position to be able to pursue a two-pronged strategy aimed at extracting oil from its vast reserves of oil shale and also continuing the exploration drive for crude oil and gas.

Under the inspired leadership of His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Jordan has managed, even with limited resources, to build a vibrant economy, a high standard of living, an efficient educational system and a quality of life which are the envy of the developing world. No wonder then that Jordan's per capita GDP in 1995 was \$6,300 (Based on the purchasing-power parity as calculated by the World Bank and IMF). This is higher, for example, than that of Brazil (\$6,100 and Argentina \$6,000) both of which are extremely rich in natural resources.

One could then imagine what impact the development of shale oil or the discovery of conventional oil reserves in commercial quantities would have on Jordan's economy and employment opportunities and also on the country's strategic position in the Arab world.

The writer is an international oil economist, a consultant for the World Bank in Washington and a technical expert for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna. He also heads the Oil Market Consultancy Service in the UK.

Flotation of vegetable prices seen as ill-timed

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

"LOWERING the price of vegetables, you must be joking." This was the verdict of consumers to the latest decision by the Supply Ministry to liberalize vegetable and fruit prices. If anything, prices rocketed sky high.

However, others take a more sanguine view. Some producers believe that the rise is attributed to the shortage of supply because of the bad weather conditions in the country that were experienced in February and April.

Officials sympathize. "In order to reduce the losses of farmers because of the bad weather and satisfy consumers, we are doing our best to speed up the establishment of parallel markets for vegetables and fruits," Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply Ahmed Kreishan told *The Star*. Farmers can now display their produce at these markets he continued.

This step will provide direct contact between farmers and consumers without the presence of a third party, he added. While the market was previously supervised by the Ministry of Supply, now its role is limited to merely monitoring producers and merchants.

And it is this that is causing prices to shoot up. For Mr Kreishan however, the problem is not quite that simple. "There are other factors

which determine the increase or decline in prices." There is the weather conditions that negatively affected the produce. In addition, the so-called "proper agricultural season" is nearing towards its end.

Kreishan believes that the price hikes are temporary pointing out that there is a decrease in some commodities. But this is not food for thought to consumers. Many say that price fluctuations have sent the wrong signals to growers and a green light to hike up prices.

Jordanian Consumer Protection Society's Director, Mohammad Obeidat said that the idea of price flotation is not a new thing. However, he criticized its timing. He pointed out that the decision needs to be based on proper scientific research of the ratio of production and consumption.

Amman Central Market Director, Mustafa Abu Osha'a told *The Star* that the aim behind the price flotation was adopted because of complaints from consumers, farmers and merchants who didn't like the price system imposed by the Ministry.

But he agrees that the present price rise is the result of shortage in produce.

"Actually, the Kingdom witnessed the worst conditions since February. Continuous rain and ice have resulted in many crop failures and losses to farmers.

"If we compare the size of available vegetable and fruit produce this time of year with the same time last year we notice a great deal of difference."

The director added that ice in April is unusual. Farmers did not take precautions expecting a moderate spring weather. "Even crops planted in greenhouses were badly hit because of the sub-zero temperatures," Abu Osha'a said.

However, market producers said that the price rise means that they would now have to stop exports to satisfy the local market.

But not so, Abu Osha'a said it can be a way out. He explained that exporting at this time is of much benefit to farmers. "Previously, farmers were complaining from the low prices that were even below expenses. Now they can benefit and compensate former losses."

However, Kreishan expects prices to decrease within the next few days as the parallel markets in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid open.

Abu Osha'a shares Kreishan's view and added that the existence of more than one market in areas with high population will create heated competition among producers and lead to a satisfactory decline in vegetable and fruit prices.

Kreishan disclosed that a regular popular market will be opened near to the Amman International Show. Preparations are still under way.

But Dr Obeidat is not optimistic. He says that prices would likely increase or even double in the very near future.

He said the notion of parallel markets have to be studied carefully before the authorities can embark on such steps so as to avoid the creation of a monopoly situation and protect small farmers.

But others expect a decline in vegetable and fruit prices within the few coming weeks when produce like tomato, which today is 450 fils per kilo becomes more readily available on the market. Tomato will no longer be exported to Lebanon, as the Jordanian-Lebanese agreement to export tomato to Lebanon will terminate today, Thursday 1 May.

On the other hand, farmers see the price flotation as coming at the wrong time. Farmers losses in the Jordan Valley last February and April covered more than 50,000 dunams planted with all kinds of vegetables. They are demanding that the government exempt them from the interest on all agricultural loans and reschedule their debts. Latest statistics estimate losses in the Jordan Valley and Deir Alla for 15,000 dunams from 20% to 100%. The expenses of their productive capacity are about JD 3 million, marketing losses in the light of current prices are JD 7 million.

British Bank offers extra service

THE BRITISHBANK, which has operated in Jordan since 1949, has become increasingly active in pioneering a range of personal banking products and services previously unavailable in Jordan.

The emphasis is now on a proactive approach to personal customers to ensure that they are aware of the range of custom designed personal loans, credit cards and premium banking services available. Direct mail, visit programs and advertising are ensuring that the Bank's customers are aware, not only of the Bank's international standards, but also of its desire to offer its customers a high quality of service.

BritishBank offers one of the most accessible personal packages to employees of leading firms in Jordan together with the only credit card currently on offer in the market.

The message, that BritishBank is here for the private individual as well as the corporate customer has been welcomed in the market place.

With the accent on well trained approachable staff,

British Bank is demonstrating its commitment to providing service quality unparalleled in Jordan.

BritishBank is the largest and most widely represented international bank in the Middle East with 28 branches throughout the UAE, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and Lebanon, an offshore banking unit in Bahrain and a new branch to be opened shortly in Ramallah.

This extensive regional coverage is enhanced by its associates, Saudi British Bank and Egyptian British Bank. In addition to its Middle Eastern network, the Bank has branches in Bombay and Trivandrum in India and Baku, Azerbaijan. It also has Private Banking operations in London and Geneva.

BritishBank is a principal member of the HSBC Group since 1959. Headquartered in London with over 3,400 offices in 78 countries and assets at 31DEC96 of USD 402 billion, the HSBC Group is among the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

Among the other principal members of the Group are HongKong Bank in Asia, Midland bank in Europe and Marine Midland Bank in the United States of America. The Headquarters of HSBC Group are in London.

In line with the government's policy to encourage local and foreign investments in tourism, trade and industrial projects, Aqaba will shortly be designated a free zone area.

Aqaba is expected to witness an active movement and become an attractive and promising center for trade and banking services, through the facilities of offshore banking. This also means a cancellation of existing tariffs and other taxes imposed on trade, tourism and industrial investments in the port.

MARKET WATCH

12-15 April

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Pharm. Industry 4.96 JMCO 2.13 National Cable 3.94 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JMCO 4.00 National Salary House 2.13 1.47 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Tamgh 2.94 Middle East Pharm. 1.64 Radi Plastic Industry 1.96 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levack & Poultry 4.00 Jordan Salpho Chemical 3.03 Jordan Investment Bank 3.17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Investment 5.56 Jordan Salpho Chemical 5.19 Jordan Steel 5.19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Investment 5.88 Dr. Addawa 5.05 BYTUNA 5.05 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Salpho Chemical 5.71 NAMCO 5.71 Middle East Complex 5.13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Industry 5.15 Middle East Complex 5.41 International Textile 4.88
General Price Index	152,340	153,810	151,830
Trade Volume	615478	556681	517252
Stock Volume	650621	571795	646753
Highest Traded Stocks	186433	151592	82261
	NAMCO	NAMCO	Jordan Electricity
			135942

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

UBS launches comprehensive guide to the Emerging Markets

LONDON—The explosive growth in the emerging economies has sparked widespread interest from investors. Encouraged by the rapid development of the emerging financial markets, investors have ploughed over \$230 billion into equities alone since the mid-1980s.

The many countries that make up the emerging markets offer exciting new opportunities. But one of the biggest problems facing global investors is that these markets are so diverse. Information is hard to find and the countries do not readily lend themselves to comparisons.

To make sense of these dynamic and complex economies, Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) has produced a

comprehensive guide to 50 of the world's key Emerging Markets.

A generation ago emerging economies accounted for about a third of the world GDP. Today, this has grown to one-half of global GDP, and is projected to increase to two-thirds in another generation.

This represents a dramatic shift in the locus of world output. While recording recent performance, the book also offers a long-term perspective on the political and economic developments. Some benchmarks for assessing future performance of the individual countries and the group as a whole are also included.

In the next 10-20 years, UBS estimates that no less than six

out of 10 of the world's leaders in competitiveness will be located in Asia—Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Korea and Indonesia. We also see strong potential in Chile, Israel, Russia, Argentina, South Africa and Mexico.

UBS is at the forefront of research into these new markets and has pioneered the development of innovative equity and debt financing for many of them.

The 50 countries covered in the Guide have been chosen for having attracted the most interest from a very diverse investor base monitored by UBS. On average they have grown around six percent annually in the last 10 years—almost double the rate of the "industrial"

world. The UBS Guide to Emerging Markets is divided into 50 country-by-country sections, each giving an assessment of the political and economic factors and exploring important areas for investors such as equities and debt instruments. A key facts page at the beginning of each section shows at a glance each country's main imports, exports and trading partners.

UBS, one of the largest and most influential global investment banks, has assets in excess of \$6400 billion and is a member of the world's leading Stock Exchanges. It has 70 offices around the world employing a staff of 28,000.

Palestinian mood darkens amid cloudy Middle East peace process

By Marjorie Miller and Rebecca Trounson

JERICHO, West Bank—Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat often plays the contrarian in Middle East peace efforts—glum even after signing a hard-fought agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank city of Hebron and generally apt to see a gray lining in a silver cloud.

Now, however, Erekat is in tune with the rest of the Palestinian leadership as he sounds increasingly ominous warnings about the collapse of the peace process and the Palestinians' lack of faith in the United States as peace broker.

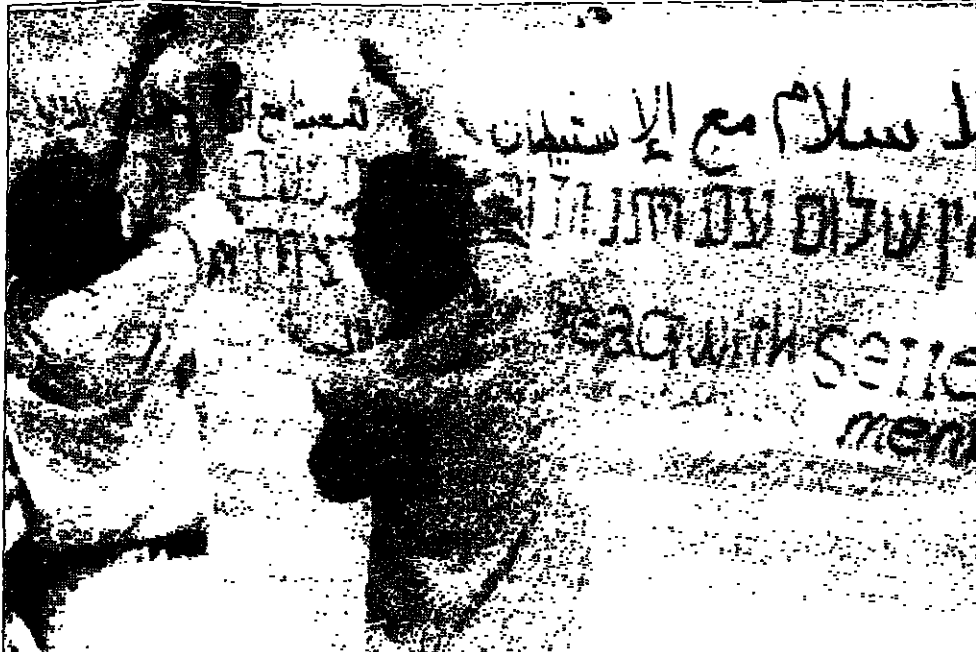
This gloom is pervasive too in the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where Palestinian support for the four-year-old peace process is dropping and the possibility of armed conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is openly discussed.

Erekat, after a recent meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington, said he has become convinced of two things: that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is determined to do away with the 1993 Oslo, Norway, peace accord's previous Labor government signed with the Palestinians and that the United States will protect him while he does it.

"I think Netanyahu's ultimate goal is to get his tanks rolling into the Palestinian areas," Erekat said. "This man considers the Oslo accords to be a poison dagger in his heart. He must pull it out. I don't think the Americans will stop him. They will intervene with crisis management or damage control to save Israel from the repercussions."

Palestinian Higher Education Minister Hanan Mikha'il-Ashrawi, who met separately with Albright, concurred in a telephone interview from her home in Ramallah. "This is the conclusion we all have reached," Ashrawi said.

Erekat said the Palestinians do not expect the United States to end its strategic alliance with Israel. "That's not realistic," he said. But anger edged into his voice as he addressed what he called American "impotence" in failing to prevent Netanyahu from building a new Jewish neighborhood in historically Arab East Jerusalem.



Gaza—Palestinian youth hang posters against settlements during a protest outside the Gosh Qatief settlement, Monday.

"We had an agreement that was witnessed and signed by President Clinton. The question is: 'Did you, Mr. Clinton, sign this agreement as a photo op? Or was your signature there to guarantee the precise and accurate implementation of this agreement?'"

The Israeli government says it has the right to build anywhere in Jerusalem.

But Palestinians view the 6,500-unit housing development in East Jerusalem as Israel's attempt to create "facts on the ground" and pre-empt negotiations on the status of the holy city. The peace agreements say the fates of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements in the West Bank are to be decided in a final phase of talks, along with the future of Palestinian refugees, borders and the possibility of Palestinian statehood.

Foreign diplomats say Palestinian disillusionment with the US mediation role has been growing since the United States vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions last month criticizing the Israeli construction on Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Palestinians expect the United States to wrest concessions from the Israelis after the vetoes but have not seen any.

A sense of betrayal has been apparent among Palestinian demonstrators who in recent weeks have burned mock US flags with the word "veto"

scrawled across them. Protesters complained that the Americans would not rein in Israel and were blocking efforts by Arab and European countries to intervene in the crisis.

A recent poll by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies found that Palestinian support for the peace process has fallen by 13 percentage points in the month since Israel began cutting down trees and carving roads for the housing project in East Jerusalem.

The interviews with 1,334 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip revealed that support for peace negotiations dropped to 60 percent from 73 percent the month before—the lowest level since February 1994, when Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein opened fire at the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, killing about 30 praying Muslims.

At the same time, support for suicide bombings, such as the March 21 attack in a Tel Aviv cafe that killed three Israelis, rose to 44 percent in the Gaza Strip from 17 percent there after the wave of attacks in February and March 1996; the support for such actions was 38 percent in the West Bank compared with 24 percent last year.

The predominant American view of Palestinian disillusionment is that it is cyclical, rising and falling with the ups and

downs of the problematic peace negotiations.

Peace talks have been frozen since the housing project construction began and the suicide bomber struck the Tel Aviv cafe. Moreover, Netanyahu has made it clear that he does not intend to cede any ground in Jerusalem or to recognize a Palestinian state. The Palestinians also think they will get back much less of the West Bank from Netanyahu than they would have from the previous government.

"The problem has always been that the Palestinians feel beleaguered because they don't have the leverage with Israel that sovereign governments do, so they look to third parties," said a US official. "Part of their negotiating tactic and strategy is to play on Americans' sense of guilt and fair play. They would like us to act more forcefully."

In the face of Netanyahu's hard-line policies, he added, the Palestinians "are transferring their expectations to the United States and Egypt to push their agenda."

But Palestinians, and some US and European diplomats speaking privately, say confidence in American peace brokering has reached new depths. Before US peace envoy Dennis B. Ross' recent visit to the region, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat was refusing to take telephone calls

from him.

Edward Abington Jr., the US consul general in Jerusalem and the American liaison to the Palestinians, has conceded he is less welcome in Arafat's office than he has been in the past few years.

Arafat did meet with Ross, who is expected to return to the region within the next two weeks, and US officials expect the two to meet again. "Because there is the possibility of a US initiative in place, (Arafat) is talking to us more actively," said the official.

Palestinians say they do not believe that Americans realize the depth of the crisis. The implication is that the peace process could disintegrate into combat between the Israeli army and an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 armed Palestinians—a conflict the Israelis no doubt would win, but with tremendous casualties and political costs.

"I think we're in deep, deep trouble. I think we have a major and serious crisis as far as the peace process is concerned," Erekat said. "To be honest with you, I think the worst is coming."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Sana—Yemeni leader Ali Abdallah Salleh puts his vote into the ballot on Sunday's elections

Mustafa Amin

A symbol of freedom

By Aziz Sami and Ghada Ragab

HE WAS variously described as the quintessential journalist, the grand old man of journalism, pioneer of modern journalism and journalist par excellence. And the hype was unfailingly true.

Mustafa Amin and his twin brother, Ali, were born on 21 February 1914 at the home of their maternal grand-uncle, Saad Zaghloul, national leader and former prime minister.

In 1931, Mustafa Amin became deputy chief editor of the weekly magazine *Rose*

El-Youssef. Three years later, he was appointed deputy chief editor of another weekly magazine, *Akher Saa*.

The twins then took the daring step of founding their own paper, *Akhar El Yom*, a hard-hitting, through, some argue, sensationalist, weekly newspaper, appeared on 11 February 1944. The style was revolutionary. Lengthy articles were replaced by bold, crisp, capsule stories under daring headlines, and a more modern concept of investigative reporting was launched. In 1952, they published the mass circulation *Al-Akhar*, a daily newspaper.

Mustafa and Ali were known for scouting out for young talent. Many a prominent journalist had his successful career launched by the twins.

Both twins were vigorous reporters. But Mustafa was the one known for his ruthless pursuit of stories. Anecdotes abound of him switching bags on planes in order to obtain confidential paper and reading, upside-down, sensitive documents on the desks of unsuspecting officials.

In 1965, Mustafa Amin was indicted on charges of spying for the United States and sent to prison under a 25-year sentence. He pleaded that he had been acting under direct orders from President Gamal Abdul-Nasser to obtain information from an American diplomat. In 1974, he was released from jail on medical grounds by Nasser's successor, President Anwar Al Sadat.

Noting that younger generations held Amin in great respect, journalist Salama Ahmed Salama said: "The story of espionage seems to have never carried much weight with them."

Following Ali Amin's death in 1976, Mustafa took over his daily column, "a thought" which appeared on the back page of *Al-Akhar*, and infused it with his own brand of humanitarianism coupled with an unrelenting quest for democracy.

To the last, Mustafa Amin maintained his savvy of the public mood on issues ranging from education to the complaints of taxpayers. "A thought" was brief, light and for all its innate humanism, scathing criticism. "The older he got, the more outspoken he became," Salama said.

There has always been a philanthropic streak in Amin's work. He set aside a charity page in *Akhar El Yom* called "Lailat Al Qadr." Through it, millions of pounds were solicited and channelled for good deeds, such as medical help and tuition fees to the needy.

Mustafa weathered two severe blows following his release from prison. One was the death of Ali in 1976 and the other was the loss of his daughter, Rauba, in 1990.

"Mustafa Amin might have been the quintessential journalist, doing everything for a scoop, when he was young," said writer Luis Greiss. "But for him, freedom was a two-way street. He stood for the freedom of all journalists, whatever their convictions, to speak their mind."

President Hosni Mubarak, in a cable of condolences to Ibrahim Nafise, chairman of the Press Syndicate, said that Amin "made contributions to developing the Egyptian press and coaching a generation of journalists who enriched Egyptian and Arab journalism."

The Press Syndicate's council, in a statement, described Amin as a "symbol of freedom who defended the people's right to liberty."

Amin was taken to hospital three months ago, suffering from pneumonia. He returned home only a few days before his death. His funeral started out at the offices of *Akhar El Yom*—in line with his last wish.

He is survived by his widow, Isis Tanawi, and a daughter, Safeya. ■

Al-Akhar Weekly

Israel starts to feel costs of peace-talk breakdown

By Rebecca Trounson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Barely a month has passed since Israelis and Palestinians broke off peace talks, and already Israel is beginning to feel political and economic costs.

Arab countries renewed their call for an economic boycott of Israel. Oman postponed a planned opening of an interest section in Israel and denied Israeli diplomats routine visas to the Gulf state. And conference organizers from Amman, to Beijing came under pressure to withdraw invitations to Israeli scientists, booksellers and lab workers.

While packing little practical punch, these actions hold enormous symbolic significance for Israel, where each hard-won step toward acceptance by its Arab neighbors has been celebrated as a major achievement.

Barring a breakthrough with the Palestinians, Israel may be headed toward a new period of isolation in the region.

"Does it matter that two Israeli diplomats can't go to Oman?" asks Gil Feiler, a Tel Aviv University professor of Middle East economics and an expert in Israeli-Arab trade. "Not really, in any practical way. But from a symbolic point of view, it's very bad. And in the Middle East, the symbolic means a lot."

Since Israel and the Palestinians signed their first agreement

in 1993, the peace process has suffered a number of setbacks. It was shaken by a series of deadly bombings last spring and again, in September, by an eruption of violence after Israel opened a disputed entrance to a tourist tunnel in Jerusalem's Old City.

But the current crisis, which comes against a backdrop of profound mutual distrust, is worse, many analysts say. Neither side any longer seems certain that the peace process will yield what it desires: for Israelis, a secure peace; for the Palestinians, a state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat of indirectly

encouraging a renewal of terrorist attacks against Israel. The Palestinians, angered by Israel's recent decision to begin construction of a Jewish housing project in disputed East Jerusalem, have accused Netanyahu of seeking to destroy the existing agreements, which are based on trading land for peace.

The negotiations have been deadlocked since mid-March, when Israel broke ground on the new neighborhood and a Palestinian suicide bomber soon after killed three Israelis at a Tel Aviv cafe.

In late March, Arab foreign ministers met in Cairo, Egypt, and adopted a resolution urging Arab League members to renew the economic boycott against Israel and halt budding diplomatic, scientific and cultural ties.

The action was unlikely to affect diplomatic and economic ties between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, which have signed peace treaties with the Jewish state. But even in those nations, there have been growing signs of frustration and anger with Israel.

The cooling of relations with the Arab world has contributed to a fading feeling of hope among Israelis that the immediate future will be better than the past, according to Jerusalem political consultant Roberto Fahn.

"I don't think we've crossed any red line in the sense that the situation can't change back," Fahn said. "But what is different from a few months ago is that the sense of hope, the feeling that Israel was becoming a normal player in the world, with its citizens having the same kinds of options as any other, is gone."

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service



PNA Minister of Local Government, Dr Saeb Erekat, opens the headquarters of the Crescent Club in Jericho Sunday. The youth-based club is seen another as another way of supporting and strengthening Palestinian institutions.



The **Star** <http://www.arabia.com/Star>
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
Online

One year on

Remembering the Qana massacre

By Ali Baghdadi

ONE YEAR ago, on 18 April 1996 to be exact, 155 mm Israeli shells donated by Uncle Sam rained down on Lebanese men, women, and children taking refuge in a UN peace-keeping compound in Qana, southern Lebanon, to escape Israeli air, sea, and land bombardment of their towns and villages, and as a result, the bodies of 102 Arab civilians were shattered to piec-



UN soldiers carry the body of a victim killed by Israeli shelling

Leading up to the Qana massacre, 17 villages had been flattened, over a half million people had been rendered homeless, more than 200 had been murdered, and hundreds were wounded, in what was named as operation "Grapes of Wrath." Then Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who was given the Nobel Prize for Peace, ordered the bombing blitz. The entire world, with the exception of the White

House, condemned this Nazi-like barbaric attack conducted intentionally against defenseless civilians.

The UN compound in Qana has become a holocaust memorial to remind the world what Zionist Jews are capable of. The hangar where the lives of 102 victims were shattered to pieces has been left as it was. Bits of shrapnel, broken furniture, twisted metal, burned blankets, bloody toys are scattered on the floor. Nearby, the mass graves of these victims have been covered in black marble and decorated with portraits of the martyrs. Arabs and Muslims from every corner of the globe visit the site and promise the dead this ugly crime will never be forgotten. The time will come when the war criminals will be brought to justice and punished.

Burtos Burtos Ghali, though he was an obedient servant of his American masters, lost his job as a UN Secretary General. He was sacrificed at the altar of the Zionist masters who control the Oval Office. His only crime during his four years of service was the issuing of a mild UN report putting the blame for the Qana massacre on the Israeli government.

The UN commander, General Stanislaw Wozniak, rejected the Israeli lies and called the attack unacceptable.

"Simply, you do not attack civilians. You do not attack UN positions," he emphasized.

The massacre was an act of deliberate terror aimed at punishing civilians for Tel-Aviv's failure to bring an end to Lebanese resistance and determination to liberate their lands from Israeli occupation.

Israeli military men who participated in the slaughter of Lebanese civilians said that the attack was justified; that they have

no regrets; and that those who were killed were just "a bunch of Arabs" whose lives are not important.

The Israeli military commander who led these men declared that this was a war and we must continue to fight like real fighters.

"We did our duty. They deserve to die because they are only Arabs."

An Israeli soldier told *Kol Ha'Iir*, an Israeli magazine, "I obeyed the orders. My conscience does not bother me at all. We should have fired more shells to kill more Arabs... One Arab more, one Arab less, you know. Even the battery commander said that to us. Any way, there are millions of Arabs."

Munira Taqi, who fled with her family to the UN compound in Qana from their home in Jebel Butum a few miles away, lost her husband and an eight-year-old daughter. The mother who was shielded by her husband was wounded in the legs. While sitting beneath photos of her slain loved ones, she told newsmen who came to visit her:

"My child was on my lap and then she vanished. Shreds of her pajamas were all that was left."

Her surviving seven-year-old daughter walks with a limp and rarely speaks. Her left leg and arm are crippled.

In the town of Nabatieh, a family of nine, including a mother and seven children (one a four-day-old baby), were wiped out by a so-called surgical strike. The father had left two days earlier to perform pilgrimage in the Holy City of Mecca.



UN soldiers stand over the covered bodies that resulted from Israeli bombardment of Qana in south Lebanon.

ca. The father now has no wife, no children and no home to which to return. American technology, as shown over Lebanon, Iraq and Libya, does work!

Earlier an ambulance with two women and four children received a direct hit. None of its occupants through their history, to intentionally and willingly direct their American supplied guns and rockets against helpless refugees and commit an ugly massacre of defenseless women and children, just survived. American weapons over Muslim and Arab have proven to be effective!

The questions that puzzles every decent human being any where on earth are the following:

How can anyone find it acceptable for a people, who had themselves experienced many calamities because these refugees chose to remain close to their homes and villages?! How can anyone imagine that people, who had suffered centuries of oppression, are able to target innocent civilians taking shelter in a

camp belonging to a UN peace-keeping unit, despite repeated UN personnel's appeals to stop the shelling?! How can any man or woman comprehend how Jews, who build memorials to remind people of the "holocaust", have the power to drop "smart" bombs over towns and villages inhabited by real people?! How can any individual understand how Jews, who continue to complain from Nazi atrocities, have the strength and will to force the evacuation of 100 towns and villages and render the peaceful inhabitants homeless with no food, water, clothing or shelter?!

The Qana massacre is only one in a series of massacres that Israel committed since its illegal creation by the West on Palestinian soil. Israel has shown the entire world that it is always capable, with plenty of American help, of acquiring and using the most sophisticated technology to kill and maim, to orphan and widow, and to destroy and burn people who have done them no harm! ■

Amman and Arab cities of the future

What will they be like?

AMMAN—Will the 21st century mean more livable cities for the Arab World? In Amman today, new conversations have begun as to who or what will determine the answer to this question.

Critical issues face the urban populace in these cities in its daily encounter with the built environment in which it lives: Will housing for the majority address their basic and future needs? What will governments and planning agencies need to do to allow residents, architects and developers design and build commercial as well as private and public space for tomorrow?

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, in collaboration with the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation initiated a two-day event earlier this week at the Darat al Funun amongst professionals whose skills can contribute to answering these questions.

Besides bringing together Jordanian architects with their counterparts from 10 countries across the Arab world, the meeting enabled its participants to exchange experiences with architects, not only based in the Muslim world, but also in the West.

Moreover, the lessons that emerged from two decades of the Aga Khan Award's search for solutions to such problems are now being shared with those who will shape the spaces and buildings to be used by Arab societies of the future.

The first morning session held on Saturday, at which Mr Ibrahim Izzedin, director-general of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation was present, was opened by Mr Ali Maher, director of Darat al Funun and addressed by Dr Tom Kessinger, general manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Dr Suha Ozkan, secretary-general of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and distinguished Indian architect, Professor Balkrishna Doshi, a member of the 1998 Award Steering Committee, introduced the Award.

"Achievements such as the restoration and revitalization of cities such as San'a, Tunis, and Bukhara, together with the provision of appropriate infrastructure and utilities have resurrected the decaying cores, of medinas for commercial and residential use," said Dr Selma Al Radi, the New York-based archaeologist of Iraqi origin, who is also a member of the 1998 Award Steering Committee.

"These efforts," she continued, "have changed the quality of life for their residents, enabling some of their poorest people to live in decent accommodation." More importantly, however, success has been achieved in the face of regulatory and bureaucratic constraints and economic pressures that plague urban development throughout the Muslim world.

Award-winning projects represent living examples of how communities in



Her Majesty Queen Noor and Her Royal Highness Princess Ghaida (right) listen to the seminar of Zaha Hadid on Sunday night. On the left is the new Director-General of the Shoman Foundation Mr Ibrahim Izzedin.

countries such as Jordan have, with the support of committed professionals, preserved to overcome the challenges imposed by long-inherited convention, custom and statute.

Whether cities like Amman can be "greener" or whether individuals will be able to construct buildings that look different but can also function differently were among the topics that generated lively debate at the first session at which Amman-based architect Bilal Hammad spoke about architecture in Jordan. The meeting continued over the second day and was concluded with a lecture by renowned London-based Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, winner of architectural competitions for the Hong Kong Heights and the Bristol Opera.

Stimulating conversations that raise not only the intellectual curiosity of professionals but also the interest of the concerned citizen are among the most beneficial results of the work that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is doing through the Award for Architecture and its related programs.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, established in 1977 by His Highness the Aga Khan, to recognize excellence in the built environment in which Muslim societies have a significant presence, is the largest of its kind in the world. Prizes worth \$500,000 have been awarded every three years since 1980 to 70 projects from countries throughout the Muslim World. Through such recognition, judged by a distinguished independent jury that typically comprises urban planners as well as architects and other professionals, and seminars and regional meetings such as the one in Amman, the Award's has a significant impact around the world.

Related programs of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture include one focused on architectural education which established the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Archi-

ecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology 20 years ago, and the Historic Cities Support Program which has completed, or is working on, restoration and sustainable revitalization projects in historic sites as diverse as the Stone Town of Zanzibar, the city of Samarkand, the village of Karimabad in Northern Pakistan's Hunza provide and the outskirts of Fatimid Cairo.

Like other countries of the Arab world such as Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Tunisia, the UAE and Qatar, Jordan has also had an Award-winning project, the East Wadhat Housing Program which is a refugee settlement approved by the community itself.

Jordanian architect Raseem Badran designed the Courts of Justice Mosque and Plaza in Riyadh which won an Aga Khan Award in 1995. Amman was the venue for an Aga Khan Award Seminar on Places of Public Gathering in Islam in 1980.

Among graduates of the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT are several young Jordanian architects practicing and teaching in Amman. The current meeting is being co-sponsored by the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation which shares the interest of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in encouraging greater awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage of the part of the Muslim World.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is a member of the Aga Khan Development Network, a group of agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities in specific regions of the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa. The mandates of these agencies range from culture, health, education and rural development and the promotion of private sector enterprise. ■

The Abu Marzook affair and what it means for American justice

Continued from page 4

tions, and a man welcomed as a leader by Muslim nations throughout the region, could only inflame the hatred of Hamas' considerable base of support in Gaza and the West Bank, erupting with terrible consequences for all involved—Israeli and Palestinian alike.

So it remains now to ask, if these realities have been obvious to any casual observer, much less to professional political strategists, then how is it Dr Abu Marzook has been incarcerated here by the United States government, separated from his wife and children, deprived of his freedom and dignity for these long months—all for the sake of a foreign power whose insincerity in this matter has never been in question?

The answer, unfortunately, is unpleasant for any American who has held this nation's constitutional stability and standards of fairness in high esteem.

The vision of sanctity and inviolability that, in the best of all worlds, guides our independent judiciary has long been—at least in theory—one of this country's greatest constitutional bulwarks against tyranny.

Yet in the Abu Marzook affair, a clear example of the corruption of our federal judiciary by the political will of the executive branch stands now, unrepudiated, as an indictment of the system.

Simply put, the action against Dr Abu Marzook was conceived when the Israeli Cabinet—hardly a branch of our judiciary, or even Israel's—resolved that he should be arrested and detained.

The US government did not detain Dr Abu Marzook because an American judge had found probable cause that he had committed a crime—rather, it detained him because non-judicial officials at the State Department asked that he be detained, and the government bent the rules to detain him as if this constituted a legal basis.

To review the legal charade fostered by the federal courts, we need only look at their halting record of proceedings against Dr Abu Marzook.

Initially, the United States detained Dr Abu Marzook at Kennedy Airport without a warrant, and indeed without any charges whatsoever.

Then, the government purported to hold him without specific charges—for exclusion, although as a permanent resident alien summary exclusion procedures we're legally inapplicable.

Their reason? Because the government wanted to minimize, if possible, any due process of law for Dr Abu Marzook, and it had no charges that it could legitimately assert.

Indeed, to this day the only charges asserted by the government to justify any exclusion proceeding are predicated on Israel's allegations, which they now drop.

And these very allegations were based entirely upon a "confession" obtained under torture, which was later recanted by the tortured man. Since when has American justice allowed the product of torture to stand as evidence in its federal courts?

Then, the government brought an extradition proceeding to extradite Dr Abu Marzook to Israel, except that Israel had not actually assembled evidence that he was guilty of extraditable crimes when the government brought the proceeding, forcing the United States government to ask for more time during which Dr Abu Marzook was detained, still without a proper predicate for holding him or the slightest demonstration that he is a danger to public safety.

Next, the government—less than two weeks after it had hastily brought its improper exclusion proceedings—asked the

One can only conclude, after a careful examination of the Abu Marzook affair—which remains unresolved as of this writing, as Dr Abu Marzook sits in the Metropolitan Correctional Center still—that Israel's legendary power lobby in Washington is much greater than any have dared say before.

While its influence over State Department Middle East policy has been born of the symbiosis of US and Israeli policy objectives in the region, such relationships have long been the prerogative of the executive branch, for better or worse.

But now the chilly hand of international and domestic political lobbying has reached out to shape our nominally impartial federal judiciary—using tortured confessions, subterfuge, and racist, anti-Islamic hysteria to further Israel's agenda in the Occupied Territories.

That our federal courts and judges have been party to such craven cynicism is only a part of the injustice here.

For beyond these considerations, there is Dr Abu Marzook himself, who has been imprisoned and humiliated by the US.

His wife and children, residents of Virginia, have been forced to travel long hours for their weekly meetings with Mousa, putting great hardship on the family.

The children must bear the strain of seeing their father in a New York City jail cell, far from home, while Dr Abu Marzook's wife has had to carry the household responsibilities alone.

His aged parents in the Occupied Territories have no contact with their son; indeed, as Dr Abu Marzook's father declines in health, there is the very real possibility that he may never see his father again.

In addition, Dr Abu Marzook's religious life has been disrupted: isolated from the Islamic community, unable to participate in weekly Friday jam'as prayers, and deprived of contact with his imam or a personal religious advisor, he has had to practice his faith as best he can, in the noisy, sordid environment of a maximum security prison wing.

Yet, for Dr Abu Marzook's part, he accepts what has befallen him with the stoic reserve of a man who has dedicated his life to the national struggle of his people.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have suffered jail, torture and death at the hands of Israel's security forces in the Occupied Territories—any historic human struggle for independence is not without its continuing human costs.

Indeed, Mousa's own family's expulsion from the Gaza farm of his boyhood in the great displacement of Palestinians that followed Israeli statehood in 1948 has framed his life in terms of nothing but this struggle to restore his people to their rightful heritage.

In the context of the life he has given to this fight, jail and persecution are mere



Abu Marzook: A moment of contemplation

Court for permission to abate these proceedings while it brought the extradition proceeding, based on a statute that had been declared unconstitutional on the very grounds that it ceded judicial independence to the State Department.

Now, with Dr Abu Marzook's extradition unopposed yet ironically undesired by Israel itself, the exclusion proceeding will begin again, and delaying it would mean that the government could seek to hold Dr Abu Marzook without legal basis for years—the very situation Dr Abu Marzook's defense team predicted would occur when its request for simultaneous exclusion and extradition proceedings was denied at the beginning of this case.

Israel's "special relationship" with the United States, forged over years of shared military and strategic interests in the Middle East, is hardly a state secret.

American citizens are free to support, oppose or ignore this fact of United States foreign policy as they wish—it is fundamentally a reality created by successive administrations of the Executive Branch of government, fostered by the Legislative Branch through approval of funds, laws and oversight, and implemented by the State Department, which is the President's prerogative.

Yet the Judicial Branch of our government is meant to be free of any of these considerations when weighing the freedom and life of a man in its hands.

Swashbuckling Fujimori gambles, wins

By Sebastian Rotella

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—After more than four months of negotiations, rumors, threats and rhetorical posturing by the government and the guerrillas, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori ended the marathon standoff at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru, in characteristic style.

The president ordered a secretive, surprising and extremely risky military raid whose speed and skill matched the prowess of the attack by leftist rebels who took over the mansion on 17 December. Fujimori bided his time and stuck to his hard line. He gambled. And the astonishingly low casualty count among the hostages—one dead—gave him a victory that had seemed unthinkable.

As the smoke cleared in front of the battle-scarred mansion last Tuesday afternoon in the Peruvian capital, the common wisdom and armchair analysis generated during weeks of crisis there evaporated along with it: An attack would be a disaster. An attack would never work because the Peruvian security forces were not up to the job. An attack would produce a bloodbath and destroy Japanese-Peruvian relations. Peru's international image and Fujimori's increasingly shaky political future.

Instead, in one stroke of brilliance and luck, Fujimori's image rocketed back upward. He regained the mantle of the anti-terrorist warrior who has brought order to Peru. That was clear last Tuesday night from the moment of his swashbuckling arrival at the scene in a bulletproof vest, the smoke of the raid's aftermath flickering behind him.

Fujimori could have been talking about himself when he told Peruvians in a speech delivered in vintage fashion from the back of a pickup truck: "We are going to grow stronger out of this experience."

Fujimori keeps a keen eye on opinion polls. He made the most fateful decision of his career at a time when his popularity ratings had sunk to near-record lows of about 45



Peruvian Special Forces carry an injured soldier in the Japanese ambassador's residence

percent.

In addition to the grinding toll of the 18-week siege, Fujimori had been battered recently by new crises. The most serious was a scandal that erupted this month when the military intelligence service was accused of killing and torturing its own agents, which worsened the cloud of suspicion hanging over the often-maligned security forces.

"It was the worst crisis of his government," said political commentator Fernando Rospigliosi.

Clearly, though, the voter approval polls were not Fujimori's only guide because the majority of Peruvians told pollsters they opposed military intervention.

In practical terms, the negotiations with the rebels of the Tupac Amaru had ground to a halt, irrevocably blocked by an impasse over the rebels' demand for the release of hundreds of imprisoned terrorists. The standoff boiled down to a test of wills between two very tough men, Fujimori and rebel chief Nestor Cerna Cartolini, neither of whom intended to back down. The president steadfastly refused to release Tupac Amaru prison inmates, a measure widely rejected by

Peruvians.

"It was an act of national responsibility against the intransigence of the Tupac Amaru," said commentator Jaime de Althaus. "Cerna underestimated the president."

"I have Oriental patience," Fujimori told the news media at one point during the siege. But there were recent signs that the president believed the time for action had come. Earlier before the raid, a weary Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani, the most visible member of the neutral negotiating commission, told reporters he did not know how much more of the fruitless process he could take. His face and words were notably bleak.

"There was a sensation during recent days that a negotiated outcome was not going to happen," said a foreign diplomat who has been monitoring the crisis. Worsening the outlook, Cerna assumed an especially stern tone in recent declarations over the radio. He said he would reduce access by Red Cross doctors to the hostages, some of whom were in delicate health.

There was another portent over the weekend. Fujimori replaced his interior minister and Gen. Antonio Ketin Vidal, chief of the national police,

who is considered a hero of the fight against terrorism. Analysts believe the two were replaced by more hawkish commanders partly because the security forces failed to anticipate the Tupac Amaru's takeover of the Japanese ambassador's residence.

Even as Fujimori's chief negotiator told the press just before the raid that the talks were making progress, the president was approving the final plans for the solution with which he was far more comfortable than with negotiating: the use of force.

In making this decision, the president resorted once again to the military and security forces—the pillar of his power since he temporarily dissolved Congress in 1992 to step up the war on terrorism. He acted this week as he did during that "self-coup," almost alone, aided by a small and hermetic circle of advisors. He came out looking like the illustrious commander-in-chief of special forces units whose exploits Tuesday were no less impressive than those of world-renowned Israeli or US counterparts.

"I think his popularity will go up and so will the popularity of military and the intelligence

services, who govern in partnership with him," Rospigliosi said. He said he feared the security services would use the success to distract attention from the current scandals.

Many analysts say that if the Japanese had not been involved, Fujimori would have ordered a rescue much sooner. The Peruvian-Japanese connection was the sensitive nerve at the core of the crisis: Peru's reliance on Japanese foreign aid and political support was seen as the central obstacle to the use of force.

Unless Fujimori received some sort of secret or tacit approval from Japanese officials, who said they had no advance knowledge of the action, he apparently decided that the chances of a successful operation merited the risks. Although the Japanese prime minister expressed displeasure at not having been advised, it appears unlikely the outcome will hurt Japanese-Peruvian relations.

"It shouldn't damage things," the foreign diplomat said. "They would have preferred a negotiated outcome, but it's hard to argue with the results."

Although the Peruvian economy has sagged since attaining world-leading growth levels three years ago, the resoundingly successful resolution of the most internationally prominent crisis of his presidency—and one of the thorniest challenges a leader could face—bodes well for his electoral aspirations. The president is widely expected to seek election for the third time in the year 2000.

"This greatly strengthens his international image," Althaus said. "He has defended order not only in Peru but in the world."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

UN reports acts of 'barbarism' against Rwandan children

By John Daniszewski

KINSHASA, Zaire—UN officials Monday called it an act of "utmost barbarism": In the middle of the night, soldiers burst into a hospital where 50 severely malnourished Rwandan children were receiving emergency food and threw them "like sacks of potatoes" onto the back of a truck to be driven away to an unknown fate.

The soldiers, wearing uniforms like those worn by the Zairean rebel alliance, also beat up two nurses and an aide at the hospital in Lwiro, eastern Zaire, so badly that they had to be hospitalized and berated them for "caring for our enemies," said a spokesman for the UNICEF.

The revelations amounted to the latest allegation of serious human rights violations against Rwandan Hutu refugees by the Tutsi-allied rebel forces of Laurent Kabila, adding to charges in recent days that rebel soldiers and Zairean villagers have killed hundreds of refugees and driven tens of thousands of others away from internationally supervised camps where they were being fed.

Monday, between 5,000 and 10,000 Hutu refugees—among more than 85,000 missing since last week—emerged exhausted, frightened and hungry from forests and drifted back to camps south of Kinsangani that they had fled after what they described as brutal attacks by villagers and rebel soldiers.

Humanitarian workers were able to enter one of the camps, at Biaro, for the first time in a week and discovered 20 bodies lying in a heap at the field hospital.

Some of the corpses looked

as though they were former patients who had succumbed to hunger and illness, but others appeared to have been hacked to death with machetes, said Paul Stromberg, a spokesman for the UN refugee agency in Kinsangani.

Aid workers have demanded a full and impartial investigation of all the human-rights violations, and are preparing to begin a long-delayed emergency airlift Tuesday aiming to repatriate Hutu refugees to Rwanda as quickly as possible. Stromberg said in an interview by telephone Monday night.

The disappearance of the refugees from the camps had set off an international outcry, including a charge from UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan that the rebels were carrying out a "slow extermination" of the Hutus, whom they blame for participation in the mass executions of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994.

At a tense face-to-face meeting last Sunday with Kabila, aid agencies won his assent to bring back the refugees. But Kabila also set a 60-day deadline for the refugees' total repatriation to Rwanda.

Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said in New York that the 60-day deadline was "unrealistic." Repatriating the refugees within 60 days could be done only if they first are found, moved to a secure place, fed and given medical care, he said. US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, in Washington, also called Kabila's deadline "unreasonable" and "unacceptable."

But given the perilous situation of the refugees in Zaire, Stromberg said, the airlift home would begin immediately. Several hundred of the refugees will be flown from

Kinsangani to Kigali, Rwanda, Tuesday, he said.

Laughlin Munro, program coordinator for UNICEF in eastern Zaire, gave a detailed account of the attack at the hospital in Lwiro, 22 miles north of Bukavu near the Rwandan border. He said 50 Hutu children were taken in all, plus about 10 of their parents. Other patients in the hospital have since run away, fearing the soldiers will return.

No children have been returned and no bodies have been found, he said. The attack began at 4 a.m. when the 20 soldiers arrived in a truck, fired their guns in the air, and began carrying the children out, said Munro, expressing concern that the children were still alive given their "extremely poor physical and nutritional state" and "the extremely crude and barbarous way" they were abducted.

"I don't know whether this is the action of a rogue commander or a rogue bunch of troops," said Munro, interviewed by telephone by BBC Radio. "What I do know is that whoever it was, from whatever side ... it was an act of utmost barbarism."

The children, most of whom were orphaned or had been separated from their families, had been gathered up by the humanitarian group Save the Children along the refugee trails in eastern Zaire last November and December. "These were children, not even teenagers—they had nothing to do with the fighting or the genocide in Rwanda," said UNICEF spokesman Roger Bottrill.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Will 'the Rock' be Britain's next Hong Kong?

By Anne Swanson

GIBRALTAR—The large mainland neighbor of this tiny British colony has gotten particularly aggressive lately.

Border crossings are more curtailed than usual, and air and sea transport between the peninsular colony and the mainland remain illegal. Residents of the colony, which has been under British control for nearly three centuries, are increasingly concerned, and are planning a massive protest demonstration against the neighbor next month.

But then, relations have never been very good between Spain and Gibraltar, the colony whose citizens worry that after the 30 June final transfer of Hong Kong to China, negotiations over their own future may follow.

"We are next on the agenda," said Gibraltar's former chief minister, now opposition leader, Joe Bossano. Spanish officials don't disagree.

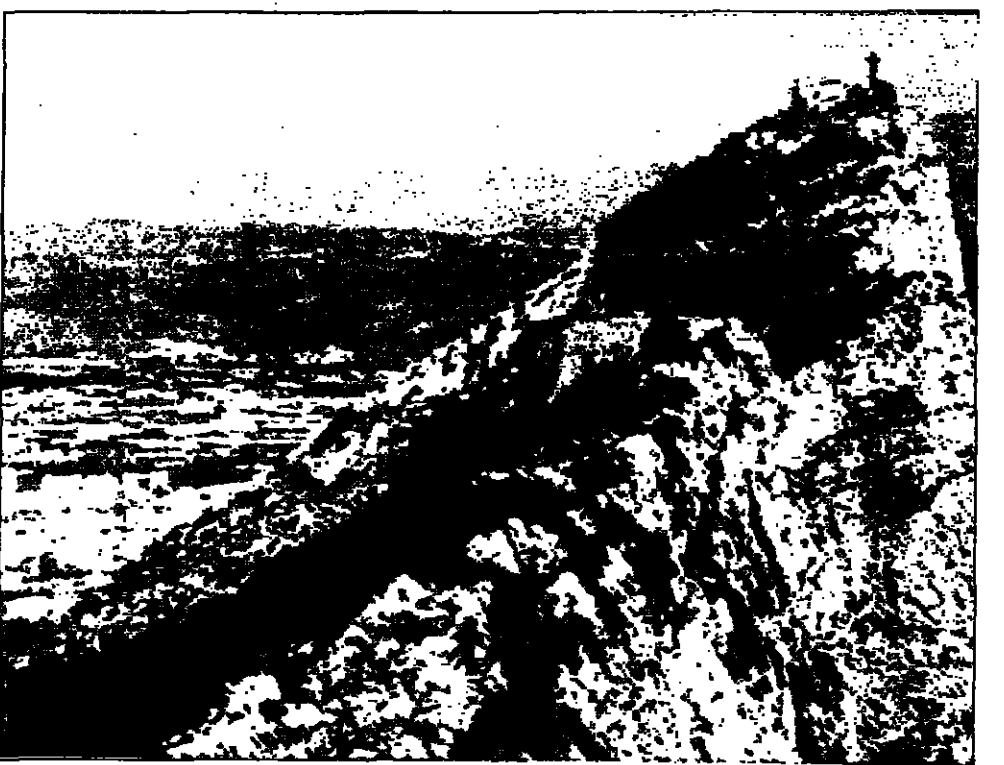
"It's difficult to explain how it occurs in Hong Kong and doesn't in Gibraltar," Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said in a recent interview. "Spain maintains its claim of sovereignty over Gibraltar. We have ample reason for it, and we expect time and common sense to establish a solution."

As Aznar pointed out, at least in the case of Gibraltar, Britain and the other parties have time. There is no expiring lease, no pressing reason to settle the fate of the 31,000 citizens of this rocky lump protruding off the Costa del Sol.

But some in the Spanish press have suggested that the transfer of Hong Kong should induce Spain to push harder for Gibraltar, which it lost to the English in 1704 and has been trying to get back nearly ever since.

To the multi-ethnic Gibraltarians, the idea is horrific. Although most residents here speak fluent Spanish, the official language of Gibraltar is English, and so is the official culture.

Restaurants serve steak and kidney pie; gin and tonics are on every menu. The duty-free stores crowd the hilly, narrow streets sell British newspapers and Cadbury chocolates along with tobacco and alcohol. The currency is sterling, albeit Gibraltar sterling, and police officers, who wear those towering black helmets,



are called bobbies. Lunch is eaten at what Anglo-Saxons consider lunchtime, not at 2 or 3 pm as in Spain.

Cars heading to Spain pass through in single file only, and drivers often are asked to open trunks and show identification. Delays are an hour or more. Spain also can slow down cars entering Gibraltar, often enough that retailers on the Rock worry tourists are being scared away.

"If people get hassled too much, they just turn their cars around and go back. ... If there was a smooth flow across the border, business would be a lot better," said Rajni Purwani, proprietor of the Marble Arc, a clothing store on Main Street.

Lately, citizens of Gibraltar have been harassed in newly inventive ways.

A busload of schoolchildren, headed for a hockey game in nearby Cadiz last January, was turned back because authorities refused to recognize their collective travel passport, which had been issued by Gibraltar, not Britain. The wife of the governor, Britain's representative in Gibraltar, was detained for several hours earlier this month because her passport was British and her car was registered in Gibraltar. A week earlier, the same thing happened to the British commander of the NATO base here.

The hassles are not just at

the frontier, either. A Gibraltar returning from Italy by air was detained at the Barcelona airport and "deported" to London because his Gibraltar passport was not recognized.

Spain will not participate in some international sporting events in which Gibraltar also plays. It refuses to recognize Gibraltar's international telephone code. And Spain will not allow Gibraltar a seat at the table of negotiations on Gibraltar's future except as a member of the British delegation.

A Spanish diplomatic source said there are reasons to support much of what Gibraltarians perceive as hassles.

Gibraltar-issued passports are not acceptable because Gibraltar is not a country. The lines at the border stem from a simple lack of resources, as in many countries. And Gibraltar is not granted a seat at the negotiating table because "they don't exist as an international partner with Spain," he said.

"That one democratic country in the European Union should pretend another democratic EU country should hand over Gibraltar as if it were a parcel is a betrayal of democratic principles," said Chief Minister Peter Caruana, Gibraltar's top elected official.

Caruana said Spain's position is particularly galling because he won his election

campaign a year ago with promises of constructive dialogue. He also has helped clean up the extensive smuggling that irritated Spaniards and Gibraltarians alike; now he finds his good will has reaped no return, he said.

Over the years, Gibraltar has complained to the United Nations and, more recently, to the EU in Brussels, with little result. Talks between Spain and Britain are conducted every year, as decreed by treaty, but nothing ever changes.

Earlier this year, Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes floated the idea of a long, multi-decade period of joint sovereignty, followed by the transfer of Gibraltar to Spain. The proposal has not been made formally, but some have viewed it as a positive step on the assumption that it was an opening offer.

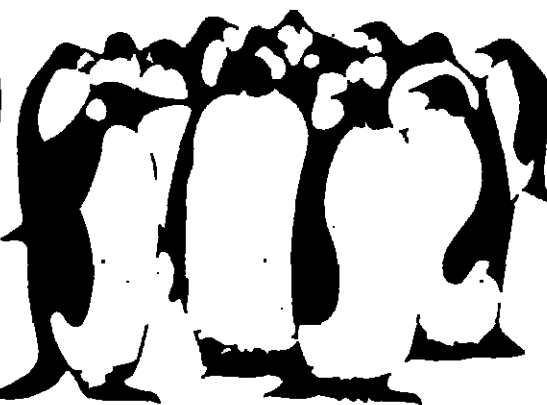
Still, it is hard to imagine citizens of Gibraltar accepting any kind of connection with Spain. In a 1967 referendum on whether to retain ties to Britain, the vote was 12,138 to 44 in favor.

If such a vote were held again, the result would be "exactly the same," said Tony Connor, a retired freight company owner. "Nobody likes to get kicked around. It is very frustrating."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



AROUND TOWN



Her Majesty Queen Noor, joined in the annual Terry Fox Run for cancer research held last Friday. Contributions from the run are going to the Al Amal Cancer Center. Many including His Royal Highness Prince Ra'ad bin Zeid participated in the 10-kilometer run that started from the Al Hussein Sports City and ended in the Al Amal center. The charity run was jointly organized by the Canadian Embassy in Amman and the Al Amal center. Canadian Ambassador in Amman Mr. Michael Molloy earlier said that he is convinced that the Al Amal Center will become the leading cancer research center for the Middle East.



The best of comedy lightens stage

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

Only two weeks after the end of the Amman International Theatre Festival, the Royal Cultural Center was enlightened again to present the highly-professional Paravento Swiss Theater Company in a sparkling "Commedia Dell'arte" performance. The masked performers spellbound the public with their perfect mastery of their interpretation.

Mr. David M. Zurbuchen, the administrative director underlined that the Swiss-Italian company from Locarno is a restless messenger of one of the four cultures of the Swiss Confederation performing 80 percent of their activities abroad, 10 percent in the non-Italian linguistic regions of Switzerland and eight percent in Tessen.

Under the patronage of the Swiss Embassy in Amman, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Pro Helvetia Swiss Foundation for Culture, this is the first performance of the company in the Arab world. Their tour includes Cyprus, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey and are performing the play "Cases of Hunger and Love" by Luisella Sala.

"Four centuries of 'Commedia dell'arte' in the history of Italian theatre and only 200 kilos of outfit freight are the main reasons of our choice," points out artistic director of the company, Miguel Cienfuegos.

"From its beginnings in 1982, our company demonstrated a strong propensity towards the comic theatre," Mr Zurbuchen says. "Until 1989 when we first literally worked on a script, we were doing clown theater based on circus, pantomime, acrobatics, improvisation and silent cinema techniques."

Mr Zurbuchen also adds that for the last few years we have been relying on the dramatic text without having given up our variety of techniques even when playing "Carlo Goldoni or Albert Camus."

Developed in the 17th century, "The Cases of Hunger and Love" was staged by Paravento in 1989 by the Italian director Alessandro Marchetti, a genuine "figlio dell'arte," Zurbuchen explains. He is the descendant of a family of professional comics which from generation to generation played such characters as Arlecchino, Pantalone, Colombina, Brighella and others. The comic art was developed in northern Italy in 1550.

"Thanks to Marchetti we picked up a whole tradition," Mr Cienfuegos says. "Although a lot of their know-how has been lost, some secrets are still preserved. We adhere to all the traditional

elements that Marchetti provided us with, from mask-wearing and broad physical gestures to musical interludes and clowning, but we do not push them to the extreme," he explains. "What we aim at is not a documentary museum-like performance, but rather balance between the traditional and the modern, now that many European directors experience with commedia by giving contemporary specific interpretations to what is supposed to be universal and stereotypical," he continues.

Just like comedy in the Middle Ages, all performers, apart from Columbina and Fortuna wear masks. "The modern element we have introduced is the fact that the traditional black masks have been replaced by more expressive colorful ones, Cienfuegos says. "The function of the mask is essential with commedia dell'arte, its 'characters' are improperly called so, they are 'types' or simply 'masks' in fact," he points out.

"The movement of the body, shoulders and mouth in particular, conveys the mask all sorts of feelings. At the same time, behind the mask the actors' mime the corresponding emotions and

transmit the expressions of their faces to the mask," he adds. "Natural expansion of the words, the gestures are convincing but more temperate than those of the actors of the time."

Arlecchino, the clownish valet, always in search of food and female companionship. Pantalone, the glib old man disguising his age to attract women. Colombina demonstrating wit and charm in a world of stupidity, greed and constant misunderstanding dramatize a scenario centered on the two basic conditions of our lives: hunger and love.

At an incredible "staccato" rhythm and with a perfect articulation of pantomime and recitative art techniques, the actors tell in Italian and English the story about how literally starving Arlecchino and Brighella find a way to soothe their hunger with Colombina's help. Being taken for a marionette and his mother by Pantalone, the two of them are caught in an elementary but very productive comical situation. The fraud is not planned and Pantalone continually prevents Arlecchino from explaining the situation.

"The laughter technique is directly connected

to the comic time," explains Cienfuegos. "The gag is just a matter of rhythm. There are certain prearranged formulas that we have to respect, but there are also a number of free 'sogetti' (subjects) that invite the interpreters to improvise and resort to their own comic sense," he says. "The reaction of the public is a key element that we have to take constantly into account," Zurbuchen adds. "The Jordanian public has been very responsive to our humor," he concluded.

The company also performed at the University of Jordan and made a four-hour theoretical and demonstrative introduction at the theatre-in-education program premises of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, that is directed by Hassan Darwish. "The details they revealed to us about the comic effects of the rhythm and the articulation between language and body movement would probably enlarge the palette of techniques we employ in problematic and deceptive theatre," Mr Darwish says. "On this occasion we have all discovered similarities between the characters of Italian traditional theatre and Arab popular stories," he added.

Canadian friends and association host reception

THE CANADA Friends and Graduates Association (CFGGA) hosted its first reception at the Marriott Hotel last April. The reception was attended by the Canadian Ambassador to Jordan, Mr. Michael Molloy, and the staff of the embassy.

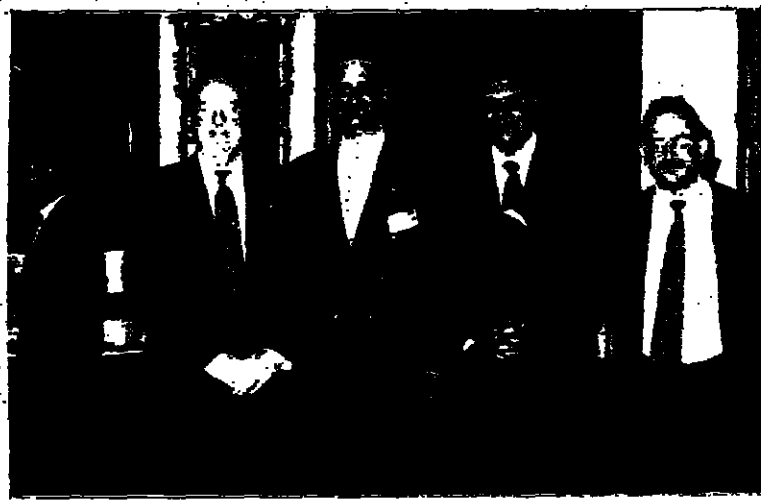
Mr. Molloy said how pleased he was with the establishment of the Canada Friends and Graduates Association. He also praised the Jordanian-Canadian relations that are based on good human communication and cooperation.

The ambassador also voiced support to the efforts of the CFGGA in promoting Canadian Universities and Colleges. Fair scheduled to be held in Amman later this year.

Mr. Molloy went on to speak briefly about

the "Terry Fox run" which was held on Friday 25 April. He also expressed his appreciation for the support of the run shown by the Jordanian people, both individuals and establishments.

The Canadian ambassador also stated his conviction that Al Amal Center to which the money raised in the run will go, will become the leading cancer research center in the Middle East.



(From left), Canadian Ambassador Molloy, CFGGA President Kilani, Star Chief Editor Osama El Sherif, Star Managing Editor, Marwan Asmar

Mr Waddah Kelani, president of CFGGA, thanked the ambassador for his kind words about the association and the Jordanian people, and for his support of the association.

In cooperation with Amman Marriott British Airways introduces new travel packages

BRITISH AIRWAYS in cooperation with the Amman Marriott Hotel, held a seminar to introduce its latest North America Value Plus packages for Jordanian travel agents.

The seminar was attended by BA Manager in Jordan, Ms Fiona Hamilton, and Director of Sales & Marketing for the Middle East, Africa and Sub Continent World Wide Sales Office, Mr Samir Daggaq.

It was also attended by Ms Jillian Burns from the American Embassy in Amman who briefed the participants on procedures and regulations adopted by the embassy to process visa applications for tourists wishing to travel to the US.

The seminar was followed by a workshop for travel agents. The workshop consisted of a series of sessions dealing with various issues pertaining to the travel industry, including BA Holidays, Executive Club, Sales & Revenue and



North America Value Plus.

BA Sales Manager in Jordan, Rose Luty stressed that "these seminars and workshops are an integral part of BA's efforts to relay the latest information and experience to the local market."

Environmental problems get a look in by students

WITHIN THE framework of the European educational program elaborated by the "Young Reporters for the Environment," the French Cultural Center and the French School in Amman held a competition about reporting on environmental problems in Jordan. French School students as well as ones from Jordanian establishments also took part. These include the Rosaire Sisters' Colleges, Nazareth Sisters' College, the New English School Amman and Yarmouk Pilots' School (Irbid).

The competition was launched on the 12th of January for three groups ranging between the ages of eight till 17. These included pupils from grades 1 to 6, from 7 to 9 and from 10 to 12.

On 10 April all participants submitted a summing-up article. Its length varied according to the age-groups: 60-100 words for the first age-group, 150 for the second and 200 words for the third age-group. Written in French, all papers are the results of the team work of students.

"The excellent results of last year's contest on the topic of international citizenship of the young encouraged us to propose to our student journalists the high-interest topic of the environment this year," said Jean-Marc Mangiante, the language attaché of the French Embassy and the assistant director of the French Cultural Center in Amman.

"Besides adopting their principles of investi-

gation and publication, our collaboration with the European Association of Young Reporters for the Environment includes the participation of the current first prize winners in the June local activities of the Direction of the "Académie d'Aix-Marseille," as well as next year's organization in Jordan of one of the Association's biannual international field missions," he said.

As the environment in Jordan was added to the priority list of the Association's educational projects, an European team of six students and two teachers will come to Jordan in March-May 1998 to investigate the environmental issue.

The chosen topics of the 60 participants relate to water and air problems in Jordan today: water purification, water saving, desertification, air pollution and its effects on health. Other subjects like animal life protection, archeological preservation, waste material recycling and hygiene have been approached too.

Suggestions and practical information was provided by Jean-Marc Hoffmann, regional hydraulic expert at the French Embassy.

The works selected by the jury were about dynamic inquiries and synthetic articles on original subjects (or showing an original approach to a common topic). The aim of the contest has been essentially educational and not necessarily linguistic," pointed out Mr Mangiante.

The best article will be published in May in the fourth issue of the students' newspaper, A Bras Ouverts (published in Amman) and probably in Le Jourdain, Mr Mangiante continued.

"A publication edited exclusively by students (with the exception of the editorial). A Bras Ouverts comes out twice a year and includes contribution from students from about 30 Jordanian schools and the French School of Amman," he explained. "About 3000 copies of the latest issues were published and distributed to 20 French establishments in the region, schools and universities as well as to 15 French schools in the five continents," he added.

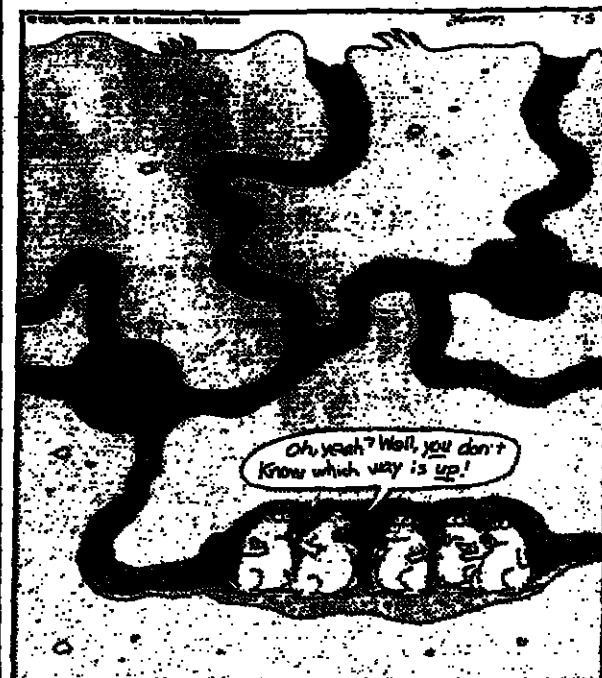
The official awards will take place early this month at the French Cultural Center. An exhibition of winning articles and posters will also be on display.

The first five prizes include a 10-day trip to France and they will be awarded to students from Jordanian schools and two from the French School. There will also be other prizes such as books, walkmans and T-shirts for the runners up. The sponsors of the competition are A Bras Ouverts, Nestlé Jordan Trading Co., Air France in Amman, Asgrow Seed Co., Solvchem Holland SV, Hachette and Cie International.

Next year's competition will be on a completely different cultural theme: Geography and history of the 10 French cities that will host the matches of the finals of the 1998 World Football Cup, added Mr Mangiante.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



The ultimate gopher insult



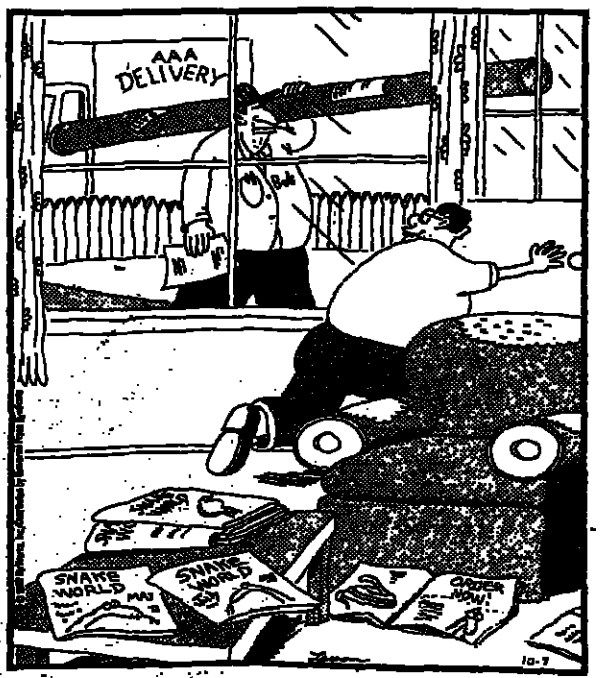
"Well, I'll bet it's still there! The hen house I used to watch as a kid!"



The woods were dark and foreboding, and Alice sensed that sinister eyes were watching her every step. Worst of all, she knew that Nature abhorred a vacuum.



A tragedy occurs off the coast of a land called Honah-Lee.



A big day for Jimmy

Coca Cola supports Jordanian youth



Students of the Jordan University for Women enjoy a relaxing day



Activities held in Zeitouna University

IN A move to encourage youth activities in universities throughout the Kingdom, the Coca Cola Company began a campaign to revitalize the spirits of Jordanian students. The first two events were held in the Zeitouna University and the Jordan's University for Women last April. The events included a mixture of cultural and leisure activities.

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Israël annonce la levée du bouclage

Le gouvernement israélien a annoncé mardi la levée du bouclage imposé depuis plus de cinq semaines à la Cisjordanie et la bande de Gaza. Les Palestiniens de Judée-Samarie (Cisjordanie) vont reprendre leur vie normale à partir de demain, a annoncé mardi Yitzhak Mordechai, ministre de la Défense du gouvernement de Benjamin Netanyahu (notre photo). Une porte-parole de l'armée israélienne a précisé que 28.000 ouvriers palestiniens de Cisjordanie et 27.000 autres de la bande de Gaza seraient autorisés dès mercredi à rejoindre leurs lieux de travail et territoire israélien. Du côté palestinien, cette nouvelle a été accueillie avec circonspection, un haut responsable rappelant que «le bouclage est une mesure illégale» et que «sa levée ne signifie pas qu'il y ait un retour à la normale». Les Palestiniens qui ont obtenu les autorisations nécessaires sont âgés de plus de trente ans, mariés, et doivent avoir obtenu le feu vert des services de sécurité israéliens. Le bouclage avait été imposé depuis cinq semaines à la suite d'un attentat-suicide commis par un Palestinien le 21 mars dans un café de Tel-Aviv. Il avait ensuite été maintenu, en raison des risques d'attentat pendant les fêtes de la Pâque juive qui ont pris fin lundi. Selon les autorités palestiniennes, les pertes pour l'économie causées par le bouclage s'élèvent à six millions de dollars par jour.



Palestine

La menace grandit

Depuis plusieurs semaines, les négociations israélo-palestiniennes restent bloquées. Et rien, ni personne, ne semble capable d'infléchir la politique du Premier ministre israélien.

Système judiciaire

Une réforme qui devient urgente

Depuis maintenant plusieurs semaines, de nombreuses personnalités jordaniennes prônent une réforme du système judiciaire. Celle-ci devrait passer à la fois par une modernisation de l'appareil judiciaire et l'adoption d'un nouveau mode de fonctionnement.

«Le système judiciaire jordanien traverse une phase extrêmement grave (...) qui nécessite une révision de sa situation afin qu'il puisse continuer à fonctionner. (...) La corruption est répandue dans le bureau, et ces problèmes doivent être réglés de manière rapide».

Ces propos ne sont pas ceux d'un parti politique d'opposition ou d'un magistrat mais ceux du prince héritier Hassan, et datent d'un mois et demi.

Le ministre de la Justice dans le gouvernement précédent, Abdel Karim Daghini, prononçait alors, par intérim, un discours du prince à l'occasion de la remise des diplômes des étudiants de l'Institut de formation des juges.

Ces derniers mois, la situation dramatique de la justice a été évoquée par des responsables politiques à plusieurs reprises. Les démissions de quelques magistrats éminents de la Cour suprême de justice ont provoqué des remous au sein de l'opinion publique. Voilà un an et demi, un mouvement de protestation a explosé au sein du corps judiciaire. Les magistrats se plaignaient de bas salaires et de l'absence de certains privilèges, tels que celui de bénéficier de voitures exemptées de droits de douane, dont les hauts fonctionnaires jouissent.

Cet aspect revendicatif de la crise qui touche le système judiciaire était le plus simple à régler. Et une augmentation décente des salaires des magistrats a rapidement été décrétée.

L'urgence d'amender certaines lois, les procédures judiciaires, le besoin d'améliorer les techniques et le fonctionnement du système judiciaire, sans oublier la corruption évoquée par le prince Hassan, constituent des volets de ce que l'on pourrait appeler la réforme judiciaire.

Les Jordaniens se plaignent de plus en plus de la lenteur des procès, une affaire ordinaire pouvant prendre plus de 3 à 4 ans. Les citoyens ont de plus en plus l'impression que les tribunaux ne constituent guère un moyen efficace pour récupérer leurs droits ou pour obtenir justice.

Pour faire trainer une affaire, un avocat peut donner le nom d'un témoin imaginaire, et le temps de chercher et de vérifier son identité, l'avocat aura gagné un an ou deux. Un témoin ou un accusé peut ne pas se présenter devant le tribunal en donnant «un pot-de-vin» de 5 dinars à l'employé chargé de vérifier les citations.

La surcharge de travail dont souffre un grand nombre de magistrats les pousse souvent à demander le report des audiences, et ils manquent de temps pour approfondir l'étude de leurs dossiers.

Il est aussi nécessaire de revoir le fonctionnement même de l'institution judiciaire. La société jordanienne a connu de nombreuses transformations.



Le prince héritier Hassan a demandé à plusieurs reprises une réforme du système judiciaire (photo d'archives).

Enfin, le système de promotion des magistrats a besoin d'être révisé. Jusqu'à maintenant, la promotion se fait sur la base de l'ancienneté. Or, il est devenu impératif d'offrir des promotions aux juges sur la base de leur efficacité et de leur compétence.

Les obstacles qui entravent la bonne marche de la justice sont connus des responsables. Ils en ont en effet eux-mêmes bien conscience. La question reste aujourd'hui de savoir quand cette réforme indispensable à la vie de l'Etat aura lieu, de quelle façon et par qui elle sera menée.

Suleiman Sweiss

Les relations d'intérêt se compliquent entre les citoyens et on a recours beaucoup plus qu'avant au tribunal pour les questions commerciales, pour la défense des mineurs ou bien pour les questions liées à la liberté d'expression. La spécialisation dans certains domaines du droit devient donc une nécessité.

Il est important pour les juges d'avoir accès à une manière simple et efficace aux décisions prises par les tribunaux jordaniens ou même arabes dans des affaires semblables. D'où le besoin d'introduire l'informatique dans le système judiciaire jordanien.

Certains procédures datent de l'époque ottomane et continuent d'être appliquées, même si tout le monde s'accorde pour les juger inutiles. C'est ainsi le cas en ce qui concerne le système de double signature de témoins lors du transfert d'une propriété foncière. Bien souvent, on fait appel à deux personnes qui passent dans la salle au moment de la signature de l'acte.

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Suleiman Sweiss

Répéter aujourd'hui que la paix est gravement menacée au Proche-Orient n'apporte rien de nouveau. Ce triste constat est hélas devenu, au fil des jours, une réalité banale. Les Palestiniens sont obligés de s'habituer aux violations systématiques de leurs droits, et voire même à l'assassinat progressif de leur reconnaissance sur le plan politique.

La poursuite de la politique de colonisation israélienne à Jérusalem-Est jouit du soutien indéfectible des Etats-Unis. Jamais auparavant l'administration américaine ne s'était montrée aussi proche d'Israël. De son côté, le Premier ministre israélien n'éprouve aucune gêne à tourner le dos à l'ensemble de la communauté internationale qui, à déjà deux reprises, a condamné cette politique de colonisation.

Mais malheureusement, la communauté internationale n'a pris jusqu'à présent aucune mesure concrète pour obliger l'Etat d'Israël à respecter ses engagements.

L'augmentation de la tension entre Palestiniens et Israéliens ne se limite pas à Jérusalem. En Cisjordanie, les explosions de colère se multiplient, notamment à Hébron. L'appât de colonies semble être sans limite. Il s'est même attaqué aux zones contrôlées par l'Autorité nationale palestinienne.

C'est le cas par exemple au Sud de Gaza, à Mawassi, au bord de la mer. Les autorités israéliennes ont confisqué 4 dunums de terre (environ 0,5 hectare), et projetent d'en saisir quarante (4 hectares), sur une zone considérée comme touristique par l'Autorité nationale palestinienne. Cette dépossession a bien sûr provoqué des heurts entre la population et les autorités policières.

Pour espérer débloquer cette situation explosive, tous les regards se tournent vers les Etats-Unis qui promettent une initiative. Mais en attendant, les négociations restent au point mort entre Palestiniens et Israéliens. Les Israéliens veulent donner l'impression que le processus de paix est en bonne voie malgré les heurts. C'est pour cela qu'ils continuent de réclamer des négociations.

Or, pour les Palestiniens, accepter de reprendre le dialogue actuellement revient à avaliser les décisions prises par le gouvernement israélien. Ils demandent donc préalablement l'arrêt immédiat de la politique de colonisation, le respect des accords signés, la reprise des négociations sur le statut définitif des territoires. Et si les Israéliens proposent de reprendre les travaux de la commission de sécurité, les Palestiniens ne leur ont pas dit que les travaux des neuf commissions de travail reprennent simultanément.

Actuellement, les seuls espoirs des Palestiniens restent dans une action commune des Etats arabes. Ceux-ci ont annoncé leur volonté de se réunir en Egypte, ou en Jordanie, il leur restera alors à trouver les moyens de faire pression sur Israël.

De Gaza, Hassan Balawi



Des affrontements réguliers se produisent en Cisjordanie depuis plus d'un mois, comme ici à Bethléem.

Football

La Jordanie sortie

Pour l'équipe nationale jordanienne, l'aventure de la Coupe du monde de 1998 est déjà terminée.

Le deuxième but inscrit samedi par l'équipe des Emirats arabes unis dans les arènes de jeu contre la Jordanie n'avait pas d'autre rôle que celui d'assurer le spectacle. Car depuis la 26ème minute et son premier but, l'équipe des Emirats savait qu'elle tenait sa qualification pour la deuxième phase des éliminatoires de la Coupe du monde. Face à la Jordanie, elle devait obtenir un nul ou une victoire pour terminer première de son groupe. Devant son public, elle a terminé en beauté cette première phase, avec comme bilan trois victoires et un nul.

Derrière elle, la Jordanie ne peut que regretter d'avoir manqué le début de cette phase éliminatoire. Lors de ses deux premiers matches qui se déroulaient à Bahreïn, elle n'a pu obtenir qu'un match nul. Si le partage des points était plutôt encourageant contre les Emirats arabes unis, la défaite 1 à 0 contre le Bahreïn était un résultat décevant. La Jordanie étant du même niveau que cette formation.

Elle l'a d'ailleurs prouvé une semaine plus tard lors des matches-retour qui avaient lieu à Sharjah en inscrivant 4 buts face à cette même équipe. Avec cette nette victoire (4-1) sur le Bahreïn, la Jordanie pouvait alors espérer acquiescer samedi les Emirats arabes unis sur leur terrain. Mais malgré plusieurs occasions, elle n'a pas pu revenir au score et l'enfer d'obtenir les trois précieux points de la victoire.

Ce bilan de 2 défaites, 1 nul et 1 victoire n'est pas démentiel pour la Jordanie. Mais déjà en 1985, 89 et 93, l'équipe du Royaume hashémite n'avait pas réussi à franchir cette première phase qualificative de la Coupe du monde, et la Fédération jordanienne de football avait déployé des moyens importants pour qu'elle y parvienne cette fois-ci. Il ne lui reste plus qu'à espérer que le prochain millénaire lui porte plus chance.

Le Jourdain

Amman

Un café aux multiples serveurs

Un peu plus d'un an après l'arrivée du réseau Internet en Jordanie, un premier café Internet a déjà vu le jour. Situé au cœur d'un vieux quartier d'Amman, le Books@café vous offre la possibilité de découvrir Internet dans un cadre unique.

La formule café-Internet n'est plus l'exclusivité de Paris ou des grandes villes occidentales. La capitale jordanienne a en effet inauguré voilà quelques semaines son premier endroit public où il est possible de «surfer» sur le réseau Internet. L'intelligence des responsables de cet endroit est cependant d'avoir été bien au-delà de la formule maintenant bien établie en Europe ou aux Etats-Unis, et d'avoir créé quelque chose de très original et de nouveau pour la Jordanie.

La fée informatique s'étant penchée sur son berceau, cet endroit a sacrifié à la douce syntaxe des adresses et messages électroniques, et a pris le nom de Books@café. Comme chacun le sait, le symbole @ est une signature qui révèle immédiatement au visiteur la nature de cet établissement.

Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait penser, Books@café n'est situé ni à Shmeissani, ni à Nweiyeh et encore moins à Abdoun. Dédouant les quartiers chics, trop commerçants, trop neufs ou trop à la mode, les créateurs de Books@café l'ont voulu à la place d'une charmante vieille maison située dans le quartier du premier cercle de Jebel Amman. «Nous avons cherché un endroit qui ait, au-delà du caractère technique, un caractère responsable du café et partenaire dans le projet. De la terrasse-restaurant à ciel ouvert située au premier étage, la vue sur la basse-ville et les vieux quartiers d'Amman est magnifique».

Ce qui surprend le visiteur qui s'aventure pour la première fois dans ce lieu, c'est la présence de livres à l'entrée. Books@café est en effet une véritable librairie. Son directeur est surpris de constater qu'après les premières semaines, c'est le secteur de la librairie qui marche le mieux par rapport à l'accès Internet ou le café-restaurant. Jazireh attribue ce phénomène au manque de librairies sur Amman et à la soif de livres des visiteurs.

Le rez-de-chaussée comporte plusieurs sections, chacune présentant des ouvrages sur des thèmes bien précis. Le choix est bien fait: aventure, biographies, enfants, techniques, sciences, etc. Rien ne manque et la quantité, toutes proportions gardées, est satisfaisante. On y trouve même des disques et des programmes pour ordinateurs sur CD-Rom.

«Nous ne vendons que des originaux et surtout pas de copies piratées», insiste Mazhar Jazireh.

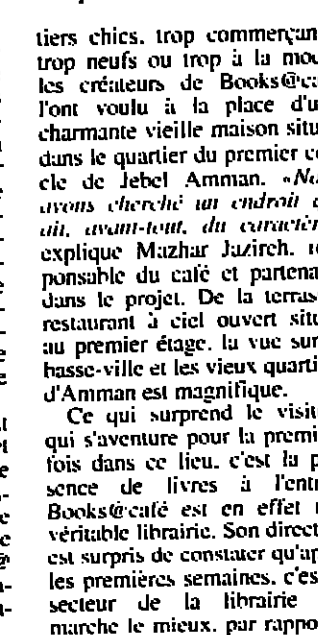
Un lieu étonnant pour Amman

Au premier étage se trouve le café-restaurant à l'ambiance fort agréable. On peut y emprunter des magazines pour une lecture sur place. La moyenne d'âge des clients est plutôt jeune.

Dans un coin de cet étage trônent six ordinateurs de type PC, dont un macintosh pour ne pas offenser les inconditionnels. Les machines sont de modèle très récent, Intel Pentium très performants, avec des modems rapides afin de donner la possibilité à la clientèle de se promener sur Internet à une vitesse raisonnable. Books@café propose une demi-heure d'accès au réseau pour 2,5 dinars, ce qui est fort raisonnable par rapport aux tarifs pratiqués localement par les entreprises qui fournissent des services Internet. Rien de tel pour les branchés d'Amman que de déguster un sandwich ou un hamburger tout en se perdant, avec délices, dans le labyrinthe d'Internet.

Mazhar Jazireh prévoit déjà un agrandissement des lieux, l'augmentation du nombre d'ordinateurs et l'importation d'une quantité plus importante de livres. Une expansion tous azimuts, en quelque sorte. Une manière subtile de conjuguer plaisir, culture et techniques de pointe. Si on ajoute à l'endroit la gentillesse et la compétence du personnel, Books@café devient alors un lieu étonnant pour la capitale jordanienne. Et même le café y est excellent.

Jean Claude Elias
Books@café
Tel: 650 457



Six ordinateurs sont à la disposition des consommateurs pour découvrir Internet

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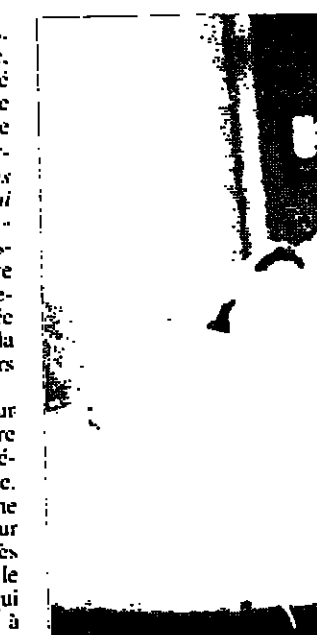
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C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Jean-Jacques Annaud. Le 5 mai à 20h30, La victoire en chantant (1977) avec Jacques Dufrilho, Jean Carmet. Un film qui a obtenu en 1977 l'oscar du meilleur film étranger.

Conférence

Les découvertes épigraphiques gréco-romaines dans le Nord de la Jordanie. Une conférence proposée en français par le Dr. Nabil Al-Jalal, directeur du département d'épigraphie à l'Université du Yarmouk. Le 6 mai à 18h30 au CCCL.

Royal Cultural Centre	
American Centre Library	
British Council	
French Cultural Centre	
Goethe Institute	
Cervantes Institute (Spain)	
Turkish Cultural Centre	
Hava Arts Centre	
Y.W.C.A.	
Y.W.M.A.	
Dar al Funn	
Aha Art Gallery	
Baladna Art Gallery	
Nabil Al-Masham Theatre	
Nabil & Hisham Theatre	

Diplomatic

Algerian	6
Austrian	6
Baharini	6
Brazilian	6
Belgian	6
Bulgarian	6
Canadian	6
Chilean	6
Cyprus Honorary Cons	6
Czech	6
Danish Consulate Gen	6
Finnish Consulate	6
French	6
German	6
Greek	6
Hungarian	6
Icelandic Consulate	6
Indian	6
Indonesian	6
Irani	6
Italian	6
Japanese	6
Kuwaiti	6
Libyan	6
Lebanese	6
Moroccan	6
Netherlands	6
New Zealand Consulate	6
North Korean	6
Norwegian Embassy	6
Omani	6
Pakistani	6
Palestine	6
People's Rep. of China	6
Philippines	6
Polish	6
Qatari	6
Romanian	6
Russian	6
Saudi Arabian	6
Slovenian Honorary Cons	6
Sri Lanka	6
South Korean	6
Spanish	6
Sudanese	6
Swedish	6
Swiss	6
Syrian	6
Taiwan	6
Tunisian	6
Turkish	6
U.A.E.	6
United Kingdom	6
United States	6
Yemen	6
EEC Delegation	6
ESCWA	6
ICRC	6
UNDP/WFP	6
UNRWA	6
UNICEF	6
UNESCO	6

Head Office Al-Masham

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CARRIAGE

CARRIAGE

THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies

Welcome to the Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 640298 or email us at StarNETS.com.jo with your news and views.

"Into whatever house I enter..."

Tele-Medicine's golden age arrives

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

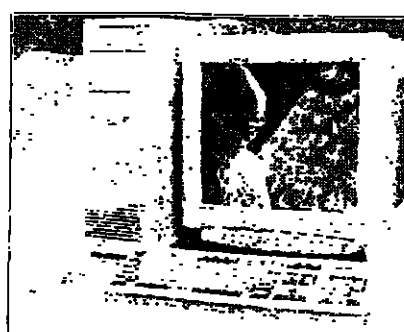
I WILL go into them for the benefit of the sick....

In this excerpt from the Hippocratic Oath—Hippocrates' famous legacy to the medical profession—the person becoming a physician solemnly promises to utilize his knowledge for the benefit of the sick wherever he goes.

More than 2300 years after Hippocrates, the same oath still stands and the doctors still undertake to "go into houses" for the benefit of the sick. However, and with the great advances in telecommunications and information technologies, latter day doctors are set to have a much higher number of houses than they can get into.

This sudden expansion of houses available for doctors to visit, is a result of one of the newest uses of telecommunications and information technologies in the form of "Tele-Medicine." The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) defines Tele-Medicine as the "provision of medical services and health care via telecommunications-based systems... [which] includes medical consultation, pathology diagnosis, education and emergency services." The idea simply revolves around the fact that

doctors these days need not be physically present on the bed side of the patients to be able to diagnose their ailments and prescribe medicines and other medical remedies. Instead,



expert doctors and specialists in major cosmopolitan centers can be "dialed-up" by medical authorities in rural remote areas and other countries and consulted on the conditions of patients by sharing X-ray images, lab reports and diagnostic results. The advances in telecommunications and computing, such as image compression and real time video conferencing, is the underlying cause for the Tele-medicine's practical application.

We, in Jordan, have already witnessed such endeavors in Tele-Medicine when the Hussein Medical City established a direct link with the Mayo

Clinic in the United States which would also be utilized by the Amman Surgical Hospital. The fact that Tele-Medicine is being tried by many medical institutions, both private and public, around the world has prompted the ITU to take the initiative and organize the first World Tele-Medicine Symposium for developing countries which will be held in Portugal from 30 June till 4 July.

The focus of the symposium will be to discuss the associated socio-economic benefits to the world's communities that include improved health care for larger segments of the world's population, a reduction in the need for transporting patients across territories or even borders, enhancing the means for consultation between health care professionals in rural areas and the specialists in the urban medical centers and the provision of access to the different medical databases by health professionals around the world allowing for exchanging information on new developments in medicine. The symposium will also discuss and probe other associated benefits that are not related to medical services such as opening new value added service for telecommunication operators which would enhance this sector's business. The symposium will further discuss a report that identifies the capabilities of major providers of Tele-Medicine in the world and the prospects of large scale trials of Tele-Medicine.

The symposium, is also hoped to have a positive role in allowing developing and developed countries to share their experiences in Tele-Medicine to the benefit of the situation of medical services all over the world.

Tele-Medicine will surely make us more comfortable about our health by guaranteeing that new developments in medicine anywhere in the world would be readily accessible by our family doctor. While Hippocrates would have never imagined "visiting houses" through Satellites, telecommunication channels, he undoubtedly would have loved the idea.

Global One / Sprint Jordan introduces a reduction in Internet service fees: More extra hours on the Internet, for less

GLOBAL ONE / Sprint Jordan has announced that, effective 1 May, 1997, their will be a considerable reduction in Internet-connectivity service rates.

The reduction is being applied to the extra-hours used by customers, but still represents a major leap in cost-savings for Jordanian Internet users.

According to Global One / Sprint Jordan's announcement, reductions will be as follows:

■ From JD 6,000 per hour to

JD 3,900 per hour for monthly subscribers— which represents a 35 percent reduction.

■ From JD 4,500 per hour to JD 2,400 per hour for annual subscribers— which represents a 47 percent reduction.

Also, Global One/ Sprint Jordan is offering a "Customer Loyalty Discount" aimed at awarding long-term users who subscribed to the service over a year ago. According to this plan, these users will get a 10 percent discount on both sub-

scription fees and extra hours charges.

These moves come at a time when there is impressive growth in the number of Internet on-line users in Jordan. It is also well-timed to secure customer loyalty to Global One in light of the possibility of up-coming competition from newly licensed Internet Service Providers. For more information on Internet and on-line services offered by Global One / Sprint Jordan, call telephone 700301.

Automatic English to Arabic translation from Apptek

A GROUP of Arab developers, based in Virginia, USA, have managed to produce an efficient English to Arabic translator which has been thoroughly tested, delivering impressive results.

The product, called TransSphere is produced by Apptek and provides automatic translation of English texts, complete with semantic analysis for both the English and Arabic languages. The difficulties nor-

mally faced in English to Arabic translation are related to the nature of the Arabic language as one dependent on the "roots" of words, which can all be taken back to three and four letter roots. TransSphere includes a lexicon containing some 100,000 words based on their roots. It also includes comprehensive terminology covering specialized fields including medicine,

business, finance, environment and much more. You can even utilize TransSphere on the Internet.

For more information on TransSphere, contact Apptek in the USA on telephone (703) 821 5000 or email: apptek@clark.net.

Also, you can contact Apptek in Dubai on telephone (971-4) 826781 or email: apptekme@emirates.net.ae.

News update

America On Line to 'absorb' CompuServe

● The world's largest on-line service, America On Line, looks set to acquire long-time competitor CompuServe.

Talks have been on for several weeks now and, in spite of a slight stall recently, it looks like CompuServe's majority owners want to sell out to America On Line. The mechanism by which CompuServe users (subscribers) will be absorbed into America On Line is yet to be discussed. For now, it looks like America On Line may become even larger. This could mean good news for current America On Line users, as the service will be utilizing more communication facilities, meaning better service for existing users.

Compaq turns your PC into a TV

● Compaq is pioneering the way in the direction of merging the TV with the PC, especially with the introduction of its "PC Theater" which incorporates a full size TV screen.

So far, most entrants into the PC/TV market have been consumer electronics units that look more like a home appliance than a PC.

Compaq, however, is gearing its system to techno-people who want more out of a PC. Naturally, the PC Theater offers the works: Internet connectivity, video conferencing, surround sound and more.

For more information on Compaq products in Jordan, contact Ideal Tech on 688123.

Global One is the Only provider of full Internet services in Jordan. **GlobalOne**

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Deutsche Telekom France Telecom Sprint

Master of the pitch, linguist, Dutch hero...

JOHAN CRUYFF, possibly Europe's best ever footballer, still pulls the crowds, finds Henk Spaan.

A few days ago a portrait of Johan Cruyff was unveiled in the Amsterdam Arena, Ajax's futuristic stadium with its less than fertile pitch.

The great footballer was there, unruffled by the eight television crews surrounding him. Cruyff was 50 years old yesterday and has been the most famous Dutchman for three decades. But his personality has been quite unaffected by the furore he creates in others.

After the unveiling he gave me a lift back into town. Three hours later he was to analyse the Champions League match between Ajax and Juventus for Dutch television. During the ride, constantly watching me instead of the traffic, he enthusiastically explained the only way Ajax could beat the Italian champions. Unfortunately he no longer coaches Ajax. The team lost.

Cruyff drove through a red light. He has a theory that he has a right to do this, as he believes the traffic lights in Amsterdam are positioned wrongly. But this time he was in a hurry, racing home to change into shorts and soccer boots. He had a date with friends to play a game somewhere among the trees in a public garden in the heart of Amsterdam. "Nothing heats soccer," he assured me.

Cruyff was arguably the greatest European footballer ever. He won rows of trophies with Ajax and Barcelona, and led Holland to the 1974 World Cup final, which the country lost to its hated neighbour West Germany.

Cruyff created the Dutch footballing tradition. But as well as being a great footballer and thinker on the game, he is a most unusual man.

The entire Dutch nation has celebrated his birthday with him, which already seems to have overshadowed next week's Queen's Day, traditionally the main Dutch holiday.

Six books have been published on him recently, every major newspaper has published a special "Cruyff Supplement," and the weekly tabloid

Panorama has dedicated more than 100 pages to him. Hard Gras, a literary magazine solely devoted to football, cannot produce enough of its latest issue with a rare picture of Cruyff smiling on the cover.

Yet Cruyff hardly seems to care. He is very much the same man who grew up in a humble home in the "Red Village" in the east of Amsterdam.

The house, fortuitously, lay a few hundred yards from the Ajax stadium. As a 10-year-old boy, Cruyff was already totally at ease in the club's dressing room among the stars of the first team: he used to advise them on how to improve their game.

Being born in a socialist housing project helped turn him into a typical 1960s role model. Cruyff was a rebel. He was the first player to refuse the fatherly guidance of his club president: he wanted good money for his skills and he was prepared to fight for it. He also fought a revolution against the Dutch football association, which let footballers play in international matches without insurance.

But he was never like his fellow Amsterdam baby boomers, the long haired "provs," who in the late 1960s and early 1970s offered raffles to traffic policemen and attacked authority for the sake of it. Cruyff's struggle was for real, perhaps greater than that of the student revolution.

Throughout his career, Cruyff has been someone the Dutch public listens to attentively. Cruyff is fluent in several languages, and considers himself a supreme logician, but his use of Dutch is a subject for writers and linguists. Cruyff's contorted aphorisms rival those of Yogi Berra, the baseball legend who created phrases such as "It ain't ever till it's over" and "I had that same deja vu feeling all over again."

Cruyff started to compete with Berra very early in his career when he said "I can't be the thief of my own wallet." He silenced the nation by arguing, "If things are not working then they don't work." On his



famous speed of thought, he said "if they time normally with me, they are always just too late," and "before I make a mistake, I refrain from doing so."

He left school at 12, and repeated for years that the crime novel Knock on Any Door was the only book he had ever read. Yet most journalists who interviewed him came away feeling slightly dizzy.

When one asked him if he thought Real Madrid, the indebted Spanish football club, would go bankrupt, Cruyff replied: "Can you imagine a Spanish league without Real Madrid?" "No," said the journalist.

"Then I think the problem has been solved," said Cruyff.

Money has been a key subject in his life. He had yet to win his first European Cup when he said: "After my career is over, I can't go to the bakery and say, 'Baker, I'm Cruyff, give me bread.'"

The first time I met him, in his adopted hometown of Barcelona nearly 20 years ago, he greeted me with the words "give me a cigarette, please." He exploited his reputation as a miser to the full. It became one of his trademarks, but it was unjustified. The Johan Cruyff Foundation, for instance, gives to all sorts of children's causes.

Today, after a heart bypass operation, Cruyff no longer smokes cigarettes. Instead he has started to eat candy the candy business in Barcelona has boomed as a result.

After 10 years of managing Ajax and then Barcelona, he has stopped working for the first time since he was 15 and finds he rather enjoys it. He lives with his wife Danny in Barcelona, and drives his motorcycle through the city visiting his two daughters.

His son, Jordi, plays for Manchester United.

The best place to find him in Amsterdam today is in the park, roller skating among 14-year-olds who wear their baseball caps backwards and who take their slight, worn companion for just another ageing hippie.

Tunisia needs one point to qualify for World Cup

JOHANNESBURG—Tunisia needs just one more point to become the first of the five African qualifiers for next year's World Cup finals after securing a 2-0 home win over Liberia on Sunday.

The Tunisians, whose only previous appearance at the World Cup was in 1978, are likely to be joined by Nigeria and Morocco, who both consolidated their strong positions with away wins at the weekend.

A penalty by Adel Sellimi and a second successive goal by Khaled Badra put Tunisia six points clear at the top of group two and needing just a draw in one of their final two qualifying games to secure their place in France.

A bizarre own goal set Nigeria on their way to a 2-1 victory over Burkina Faso in group one on Sunday while Morocco beat Sierra Leone 1-0 on Saturday to remain top of group five.

The situation in the other two qualifying groups remains tight with South Africa and Congo sharing the lead in group three and Angola and Cameroon set for a battle in group four.

Tunisia's win ended the hopes of Liberia's large band of European-based professionals, led by former world footballer of the year George Weah, and also left pre-tournament favourites Egypt seemingly out in the cold.

Egypt's 3-2 win over Namibia in Windhoek on Saturday, which came courtesy of a last-minute



goal from defender Mehdi Abdelhadi, still gives them the slightest of mathematical chances but only a major disaster will prevent the Tunisians from progressing to France.

Nigeria went three points clear in group one with their win in Ouagadougou, which saw the home team give away a 40th-minute own goal when defender Magaoule Diabate knocked an innocuous-looking back pass to goalkeeper Ibrahim Diarra, who let the ball roll through his legs and into the net.

Barcelona striker Emmanuel Amunike outperformed the Burkina defence for the second goal before Mamadou Zongo got a late consolation for the home team.

Nigeria's chances were also boosted by the defeat in Nairobi on Sunday of their closest rivals Guinea. A fourth-minute penalty

by defender Musa Otieno gave Kenya a 1-0 win and second place in the standings.

Bussir Sahleddine's 40th minute goal saw Morocco win away at Sierra Leone on Saturday and they lead Ghana by one point in group five.

Ghana won their first match after three successive draws by beating Gabon 3-0 in Kumasi on Sunday, including two second-half goals from Italian-based defender Mohamed Gargo.

But Morocco could go four points clear later this week if FIFA decide to give them the points from their abandoned match against Gabon earlier in the month.

Unruly fans invaded the pitch in Libreville 10 minutes into the second half with Morocco leading 4-0, and FIFA are expected to let the result stand.

South Africa won a hard-fought 2-1 win over Zaire in Lome, Togo, on Sunday to go top of group three with Congo, who were beaten 3-0 in Zambia.

Striker Phil Masinga scored a 71st-minute winner for South Africa in the match moved from Zaire's capital Kinshasa because of the civil war in the country.

The African champions and Congo have seven points each with Zambia two behind after their win in Lusaka.

Two late goals from Bernard Tchoutang and Patrick Mboma against Togo put Cameroon top of group four but Angola's goalless draw in Zimbabwe kept up their chances of qualifying ahead of the Indomitable Lions.

Angola host Cameroon in their next match in Luanda on June 8 which could well decide the outcome of the group.

Maradona reappears in all-star game

BARCELONA—An overweight but skillful Diego Maradona made a successful reappearance as the Rest of the World XI came back from 2-0 down to beat Europe 4-3 in a charity game on Sunday.

But only 2,000 fans were present in Barcelona's Olympic stadium to see the former Argentine World Cup star, who recently announced his return to Boca Juniors.

Although Maradona played for an hour before being substituted and showed that he still has the touch that took him to the top, he was overshadowed by goalkeepers 'el Mono' Montoya and Rene Higuita.

Montoya pulled off a string of brilliant saves to keep the Rest of the World in the game before the break, when he gave his place to the flamboyant Columbian.

Higuita delighted the few supporters by producing one of his trademark scorpion kicks and went on to set up a goal in a sortie to the half way line.

The game was played on behalf of the Association of International Professional Footballers after the Spanish football authorities had objected to the idea of raising funds for Jean-Marc Bosman, the Belgian player whose test-case brought down barriers to players' movement within the European Union.

The game also marked the reappearance on the bench of former Johan Cruyff, who was dismissed as Barcelona coach just over a year ago.



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